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## CUBA AND COMMUNISM

VOL 13

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J. P. MORRAY

*Articles by*

**PAUL A. BARAN**  
**CHE GUEVARA**

**FIDEL CASTRO**  
**MARC SCHLEIFER**

*Special 96-Page Issue*

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## NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

With this special 96-page summer issue, we continue the policy initiated a year ago of bringing you, fully and promptly, the material you need to understand what is happening in Cuba and what Cuba means for the rest of the hemisphere. Joseph P. Morray has been in Havana since last October. His background as a social scientist, his thorough command of the Spanish language, and his numerous contacts at all levels of Cuban society combine to make him an ideal observer and interpreter of the present Cuban scene. His report, we believe, is an example of the writing of contemporary history at its best. After reviewing latest economic developments and the progress of the astonishing campaign to eliminate illiteracy by the end of 1961, Professor Morray undertakes a frank and detailed analysis of the most controversial aspect of the Cuban Revolution, its relation to Communism abroad and at home. We commend this analysis not only to MR's regular readers but also to all the gentlemen in Washington from President Kennedy down who are responsible for making United States foreign policy. They are avowedly fighting Communism; Professor Morray proves, irrefutably we think, that their actual accomplishment is increasingly to "make the world safe for Communism." They ought to think it over, seriously. Maybe they would conclude that even from the point of view of their own objectives a policy of peaceful coexistence would yield better results. It couldn't very well yield worse.

(continued on inside back cover)

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# CUBA AND COMMUNISM

by

JOHN J. LEWIS  
and  
JOHN J. LEWIS

with  
an introduction  
by  
JOHN J. LEWIS

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESS





## CUBA AND COMMUNISM

BY J. P. MORRAY

*They had us married to a lie.*  
—Fidel Castro

Events in the little island of Cuba are shaping the destiny of men far beyond its shores. For the people of Cuba itself the upheaval has, of course, been a decisive turning point in their lives. The people of Latin America generally, because they share the predicament that brought Cuba to this crisis and struggle, are affected by what they see and hear of it. Fidel Castro is a name that already wins and loses votes in South American elections and causes street fighting between partisans assembled either to cheer him or to condemn him. Fidel has put Cuba and South America even on the maps of United States newspapers. Cuba is now seen, with reason, to be a factor in the world struggle between socialism and capitalism, so American interest in the little Caribbean island is charged with all the intense anxiety and hostility that have characterized the cold war.

The readers of MONTHLY REVIEW are among the best informed of all Americans on the Cuban Revolution, thanks to the writing of Leo Huberman, Paul Sweezy, and Paul Baran in earlier issues. Still, the pace of events in Cuba since their joint visit in October 1960 has been very rapid, and there is much new evidence to report and interpret. Because of the requirements of background and continuity, some repetition of what has already appeared in MR has been unavoidable, but an attempt has been made to keep it to the necessary minimum.

The period to be covered in this article begins with the announcement on October 13, 1960, of the nationalization of all banks and of 382 major industrial enterprises in Cuba, includ-

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*Professor Morray has been in Cuba since October, 1960, gathering material for a book. He is the author of the forthcoming MR Press Book From Yalta to Disarmament: Cold War Debate.*

ing sugar mills, textile factories, railway companies, rice mills, coffee roasting plants, beverage plants, milk condensing plants, department stores, and motion picture circuits. This decree, added to the earlier nationalization of foreign-owned sugar mills and the government seizure of enterprises purchased during the Batista era with stolen funds, placed approximately 80 percent of industrial capacity under government control. As explained in a preamble to the decree, it was designed to enable the revolutionary government to plan economic development effectively. It made clear that Cuba would develop along socialist lines, relegating private enterprise to a subordinate role. On the day following, October 14, 1960, another decree announced Urban Reform, which put an end to private enterprise in urban real estate. It converted tenants into purchasers of their apartments and houses and announced government plans to build new housing for which a charge of 10 percent of the occupant's income would be collected during a transitional period. The decree also declared the government's ultimate goal of providing housing to everyone at no charge. On October 19, 1960, the United States imposed a general embargo on all shipments of merchandise to Cuba, excepting food and medicine. In January the United States broke diplomatic relations with Cuba and forbade travel there by United States citizens except in cases considered by the State Department to be "in the national interest."

These months since October have also been a period of civil war, beginning with an intensification of terrorist activity against the Cuban government. Following a long series of bombings in December, sometimes reaching fifteen per day, the Cuban government established drastic punishments for terrorist activities. The bombings have continued, many arrests have been made, and many persons, perhaps 50, have been executed under the new decrees after summary judgments by revolutionary tribunals. It is now known, as a result of recent newspaper revelations in the United States, that these terrorist explosions have been carried out under the direction of Manuel Ray from Miami as a part of the campaign to weaken the government's ability to resist an invasion.

One invasion took place by means of parachute airdrops of

personnel and equipment, continued over a period of several months, in the Escambray Mountain region. Much of this equipment fell into the hands of peasants who turned it over to the government forces. The clean-up of this offensive occupied several thousand Cuban militiamen during the months of January, February, and March. Though some of the anti-Castro forces are doubtless still hiding in the wild mountain regions, they no longer offer any serious threat and most of the defensive forces have been withdrawn.

The second invasion began with aircraft bombing attacks on three Cuban airbases on April 15, 1961. This was followed two days later by landings in Cienaga de Zapata on the southern coast of Cuba by an invasion force of 1,400 Cubans. They had been recruited in Miami and New York and trained by Americans, agents of the United States Central Intelligence Agency, at bases in Louisiana, Puerto Rico, and Guatemala. At first the United States government denied having had anything to do with the invasion, although it expressed hopes of seeing it succeed. Later, under the pressure of newspaper disclosures, it seemed to be admitted by all concerned that the United States government had approved, organized, financed, and chosen the leadership for the invasion attempt. The invasion collapsed within 72 hours, leaving the Cuban government stronger than ever before.

At the height of the invasion crisis, speaking in a Havana cemetery on April 16th at the funeral of victims of the air raids, warning the country that the invasion would begin at any moment and ordering a general mobilization, Fidel for the first time called the Revolution socialist. During the battles of the following three days on the beaches of Cienaga de Zapata, the workers, peasants, and students who comprise the Revolutionary Militia and the Rebel Army shouted their support for the "Socialist Revolution" as they fought with exemplary bravery and irresistible determination under heavy fire from Sherman tanks, bazookas, artillery, mortars, and aircraft. The victory was considered by the Cubans a victory for socialism. The period ended with a huge May Day Parade, lasting 14 hours, in the Civic Plaza of Havana, celebrating international proletarian solidarity and the triumph of the Socialist Revolution.

Before analyzing the political significance of these dramatic events, we must look at other, less spectacular but no less important developments that are taking place in the countryside as a result of the Agrarian Reform, and in the cities as a result of other revolutionary measures.

### Agrarian Reform

The revolution in the countryside is being administered by the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA). This work began in the Rebel Zone in 1957 as a part of the strategy of guerrilla warfare. It assumed revolutionary proportions in May, 1959, with the expropriation and redistribution of the largest landholdings. The resulting increase in agricultural production is already impressive and is continuing. This is being achieved through crop diversification, land reclamation, more intensive cultivation, more fertilizer, better irrigation, more machinery, more insecticides, more technical advice, better marketing arrangements, more credits, better organization, and more experience in INRA.

The improvement in land use is reflected in statistics on acreage under cultivation and output of various products. Recent INRA figures put the amount of land under cultivation at the end of 1960 at 6 million acres, compared with 5.2 million in 1959 and 5 million in 1958. This will be increased still further to 7.8 million acres in 1961. This new land is coming principally from the neglected tracts that had become overgrown with *marabu*. After all the sugar cane has been cut during the current harvest, some of the cane land will be plowed and converted to other crops. The table on the next page, based on an INRA Report of May 17, 1961, shows the order of increases in production.

Accompanying this increase and diversification in land cultivation is an increase in employment in the countryside. In a speech in December, Fidel put this increase at 200,000, which would mean a reduction in the unemployed since the Revolution took power from approximately 370,000 to 170,000. Year-round employment will soon be available to all who live in the country.

	Under Cultivation (Thousands of acres)			Approximate Production (Thousands of tons)		
	1958	1960	1961 (Planned)	1958	1960	1961 (Planned)
Rice	274	399	531	225	333	476
Corn	419	471	832	161	232	434
Millo (grain for livestock)	28	60	333	15	35	201
Beans	41	211	390	11	40	122
Potatoes	19	23	31	77	110	165
Peanuts	10	60	93	4	27	49
Cacao	22	22	51	2	2	3
Tobacco	144	157	181	45	56	65
Cotton	0.3	45	102	0.2	24	59
Beef				178	212	241
Pork				27	45	(*)

\*Not available

The system of machinery rentals, technical help, and credits for seed and fertilizer to the private sector is also expanding. Though the Revolution is now described officially as socialist, this does not mean that the small, private cultivators have ceased to receive government aid. They are, in fact, an important human base of the Revolution and their partiality to private ownership is scrupulously respected as a means of keeping their good will. There are approximately 120,000 peasants in this class. Before the Revolution they scratched out a meagre existence on their small plots. The banks would not risk lending them money for seed and fertilizer, nor could they rent or buy machinery. They had to market their crops through middlemen who pocketed a sizable percentage of the return. This class of peasant also lived in constant dread of the bothersome arrogant army rural guard, who carried on their private exploitation of the peasants by compelling services and contributions as the price of being left in peace. The peasants had no defense against these aggravating arbitrary exactions, because the rural guard roamed the land as agents of the supreme rulers, the landlords, whom they served as an indispensable gendarmerie against peasant discontent. It is not surprising, therefore, that the first substantial support for the Revolution came from this peasant class. Such were the people who inhabited the foothills and the slopes of the Sierra Maestra when Fidel and the eleven survivors of the *Granma* expedition began their guerrilla struggle.

The Rebel Army that grew from that guerrilla nucleus was made up principally of volunteers from the harassed peasantry. They joined Fidel and fought doggedly to victory, because he promised them secure property in a piece of land.

The conversion of this whole class of peasants, most of whom were tenants, sharecroppers, squatters, or precarious owners of their small plots, into outright owners with virtually unlimited credit facilities and machinery for individual cultivation is a major feature of the Agrarian Reform, less spectacular but no less important to the stability of the Revolution than the conversion of the large sugar and cattle estates into co-operatives and people's farms. A plot of 67 acres (2 *caballerias*) has been fixed as a "vital minimum" for a family of five people. Every peasant who wants to earn a livelihood by cultivating his own land has a right to own 67 acres without paying anything for it. If the plot he cultivated before the Revolution was smaller than 67 acres, this is increased to the vital minimum by adding neighboring strips. If this is impossible, the family is offered a plot of 67 acres in another area. (The state has ample land available for distribution out of the great expropriated latifundia.) As of May, 1961, 31,000 peasants from this sector, the "poor peasants," had received title to their land in formal ceremonies that for them were the climax of the Revolution.

If the peasant cultivated a plot larger than 67 acres before the Revolution, he also has a right to become the owner of the entire plot up to a maximum of 167½ acres (5 *caballerias*), but with an obligation to pay the state for the additional acreage received above the vital minimum. Payments are to be made over a twenty-year period at 4½ percent interest. Delivery of title to these plots to "the middle peasants" is just beginning. Tenants of large plots continue to pay rent on land in excess of 167½ acres, with no right of acquisition.

These private owners are not being urged to form co-operatives. Fidel mildly rebuked any INRA officials who have taken the opposite line as over-zealous and playing into the hands of the counter-revolutionaries, who try to frighten the peasants with rumors of forced collectivization. To counteract these fears, INRA has dropped any plans to expand the creation of co-operatives. It will not even approve voluntary initiatives except

in very special circumstances. At present, 59 percent of cultivated land is in private hands, 29 percent in people's farms, and 11 percent in cooperatives.

Approximately 60% of sugar lands have been expropriated. The land that formerly belonged to the sugar mill companies is being cultivated on a cooperative basis. The companies' hired laborers, who lived miserably through the long "dead time" on their harvest-period wages, usually mortgaged before received, are now members of the 622 new cooperatives. Under INRA guidance, they are diversifying their production with dairy herds, fruit orchards, and vegetable gardening. This gives them year-round employment and better food resources for consumption on the cooperative. At the same time, they are increasing the production of sugar. INRA's plans to relieve Cuba from the evils of monoculture do not contemplate any reduction in sugar production. On the contrary, this is to rise each year, though it will occupy less land due to more intensive cultivation.

The cooperatives are under strong inducements to operate efficiently, since they keep their profits after covering their expenses. Some of these cooperatives are basically better income producers than others, due to differences in quality of the land. Therefore some cooperatives are "rich," others "poor." This has caused some discontent with the system. Also the cooperative members employ hired labor at harvest seasons. Though the government fixes the wages, the cooperative members in their zeal to maximize their own profits, sometimes prove hard task masters. These imperfections in the system are not so serious as yet to have destroyed its utility; and Fidel indicated in a recent speech that in this sugar sector, the cooperative would continue to be the standard form of organization for the present.

In other sectors, organization is taking the form of the *granja del pueblo* or people's farm. The vast, uncultivated cattle estates, for example, which make up the bulk of expropriated land other than sugar, are now being brought under cultivation through the creation of new farming communities in convenient locations. These people's farms function as state, not cooperative, enterprises. The state makes the investment, as it would in a factory, and puts people to work on the land on a

wage basis, adjusted to need rather than to the quality of the land. The state carries the burden of the least economical enterprises. It provides houses, schools, a store, and community sports and cultural facilities free of charge. Fidel has also announced that the children living in people's farms will be fed and clothed through school age at state expense. Large families cease to be a financial burden on parents, and children learn better dietary habits under professional care. Many of these farms are already functioning, dividing their labor between construction of community facilities and cultivating their first crops. The state will use them as food and raw material sources for city workers and factories.

The people's farms, the fruit of a rational plan, cannot fail to impress a visitor. There was idle land and there were idle people. INRA has brought them together to generate new production, which saves foreign exchange, and new employment, which gives security to some long-forgotten human beings and makes a national industrialization plan feasible by creating a market in the countryside for factory products. The farm residents, many of them toothless and pinched from a lifetime of undernourishment, are becoming new people, with much improvement over their former lives already achieved and boundless prospects in the future. Some of them have daughters among the 16,000 country girls who are being trained in Havana to teach sewing and dressmaking among the country population. Girls from such origins would never have seen Havana under the old regime, except perhaps as prostitutes. Another detail is characteristic of *Fidelismo*: the mothers of these girls were all brought to Havana as guests of the government for Mother's Day. Besides hard work for more production, there is always time for the human touch.

Large quantities of farm machinery are arriving from the socialist countries. At the end of 1960, 198 bulldozers were at work clearing land. Another 150 are to arrive in 1961 and 150 more in 1962. By the end of 1961, according to Fidel, 5,000 tractors will have arrived from Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and the Soviet Union. Another 3,000 are to arrive in 1962. The newspapers announce the arrival of this equipment from time to time, and it may be seen at work in the fields.



Country people, including small-town merchants, feel prosperous. There is more money flowing. Markets for all crops are assured, at prices fixed by a solicitous government, not by grasping middlemen. There is also steady work for so many hands that the pool of seasonal workers, diminished also by militia duty, is now too small to handle the sugar harvest. This is being remedied by city dwellers, who go to the country on weekends by the thousands to cut cane, led by Fidel, President Dorticós, and the Ministers. The families go along and everybody has fun and recreation (eating a good part of the cane they cut). Related to this is volunteer manual work on construction jobs or at the docks, a custom introduced by Ché Guevara after he observed it in China. These weekend labor expeditions have political effects. Like the militiamen who drill in their spare time, people who cut cane without pay make themselves a part of the Revolution. It also strengthens their confidence to see how many other people are willing to give up their Sundays to assure success in a social task. The Revolution harvests citizens as well as sugar.

During the first two years the big effort in agriculture was to increase production rapidly without waiting for a national plan. Beginning this year the production of each farm will be fitted to a quota assigned by INRA, based on what the unit has done in previous years.

All in all, developments in the countryside are extremely impressive. Two thousand retail country stores, built by INRA and well stocked with the necessities in food and clothing, have lowered the cost of living for people who formerly were at the mercy of the *garrotero*, the village merchant who charged high prices and usurious interest in return for credit in the dead time. Hundreds of new schools have been completed and staffed with 10,000 additional teachers. Thousands of Cuban *campesinos* have medical care for the first time, thanks to the creation of clinics in the cooperatives and people's farms. These are staffed with doctors, nurses, and welfare workers whose free care and medicines do not stop at the limits of the cooperative, but are made available to everyone in the area. Approximately 12,000 4-room and 5-room houses, equipped with cement floors, electricity, running water, toilets, and showers, have been completed

for country people; and thousands more are under construction, a visible promise that in time the Revolution will rescue all Cubans from the unsanitary *bohio* of dirt floor, palm frond roof, and no toilet.

Only the rich peasants, those who own 600 to 1,000 acres of land, feel apprehensive. They are doing well, but they fear another Agrarian Reform that will reduce their holdings. Many of them criticize the new order, despite some benefits from it; and a few have even fomented pockets of counter-revolution, coordinating their activities with arms deliveries and paratroopers sent from outside Cuba. None of this has given the government serious trouble, although the Escambray Mountain nucleus tied down several thousand militiamen for several months.

As for sugar markets, the socialist countries, although they do not need to import sugar from outside their own bloc, have agreed to purchase 4 million tons this year at 4 cents per pound, if the United States does not resume purchases. This is one detail in a general picture of total cooperation on the part of the socialist countries to help Cuba pull through the critical years of its trade rupture with the United States. This guaranteed market of 4 million tons, added to what Cuba will be able to sell in the world market, provides the setting for the first "Zafra del Pueblo," the first people's harvest.

At a meeting in December of representatives from all branches of sugar production, Fidel's proposal to cut all cane standing was approved. This is another striking result of changing the form of ownership of the sugar resources. Since sugar need not be cut every year, under private ownership of the economy the size of the harvest was fixed each year to maximize the profits of the owners. They never allowed the workers' continuing need for a livelihood to disturb their calculations. Restricted harvests, with aggravated unemployment, have been the rule since the end of the war, because there was an excess of supply, left swollen by the shrinkage of transitory war markets, over world demand. The people's harvest can take full advantage of all natural and human resources to keep production at a maximum, whatever the state of the world market. The welfare of the whole Cuban people, and not just the small

group of profiteering owners, can now determine sugar policy.

What Cuba will do with the extra sugar to be cut remains to be seen. By agreement with the workers, the excess over last year's harvest will be cut at low wages (about 60 percent of normal). For the workers this is extra income; for the government it provides a cheap fund of sugar that can be used according to circumstances. An implied threat to dump would seem to be aimed at other cane producers such as the Philippines, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico, which might be tempted by the devil to increase their production at Cuban expense. The excess may also be utilized as a base for a processed feed for livestock. Hogs are already being fattened on a sugar-base feed. Since pasture lands are to be reduced from twelve million acres to two million acres while meat production is to be increased, cultivated and manufactured feeds to supplement pasturage assume great importance.

#### **The Revolution in the Cities**

When we turn our attention to the cities we find that the Revolution has fewer concrete accomplishments to its credit in the realm of industry than in Agrarian Reform. Rather, it has concentrated on certain secondary projects, while preparing plans for a major effort at industrialization still to come. City dwellers felt certain quick benefits from revolutionary laws. One of the first cut rents by half and lowered electricity and telephone rates. The Urban Reform Law converted all tenants into purchasers of their apartments and houses with the obligation to continue the customary monthly payments (as reduced by the earlier rent law) to the state for a varying number of years, from five to twenty depending on the age of the structure. The older the structure, the shorter is the remaining term of obligated payments, since the former owner has already recovered a larger portion of his investment in the form of rent. The state pays the former landlords, by way of compensation for the forced sale, amounts up to a maximum of 600 pesos per month during the remaining period of years that the new owner is under obligation to make payments on the purchase price. This law illustrates the attempt on the part of the revolutionary government to protect the smaller landlords and landladies

("the poor widows") accustomed to living from their rents. A monthly income of 600 pesos, equivalent to \$600, is high in Cuba. Probably not more than 2 percent of all Cubans receive so much in income from all sources. Yet the new law guarantees continued payments to the former property owners of this amount, without requiring any services in return; the smaller owners will thus be fully compensated for their property. Approximately 100,000 former owners are now receiving their monthly checks under this program. In one way they are even better off than before, since they do not have to knock on doors to collect rents from hard pressed or irresponsible tenants. The state pays the former owner promptly even though the new owner neglects to pay the state. The big landlords lose their income from rents in excess of 600 pesos per month. This gives the state an annual fund of 80 million pesos for investment in new housing construction.

To take care of elderly people who counted on a modest continuing income from rented property, the law also establishes a pension system. Any amounts up to 150 pesos per month they will continue to receive for life as a pension, even after all obligated payments to the state by the new purchaser have been liquidated.

The Revolution undoubtedly gained some good will with the tenant class by this law, which promises them the happy state of clear ownership, with no more monthly payments, at the end of a definite period of time. The law also takes account of the fact that rent control had paralyzed private investment in housing and announces the determination of the government to deal with the housing problem by means of state investment. This may prove in the long run to be the most important consequence of the law. Housing in Cuba developed extremely unevenly under private enterprise. Investors put their funds only into upper-class housing, because they could charge very high rents or sell at very high prices to a small class of wealthy people. Havana, capital of a poor country, has residential sections that compare favorably with the most expensive American suburbs. The real estate speculators also used a corrupt government for procuring the uneven installation of public services favoring upper-class sections, those in which they had placed

their own investment, over the poorer districts which had no such champions in the governing councils. The bulk of the workers lived in ugly, crowded, and unsanitary barracks. As more people flocked to the cities looking for steady employment not to be found in the country, urban rents were pushed up out of proportion to wages. Before the Revolution it was usual for a worker to be paying about 30 percent of his wage to a landlord.

The Urban Reform Law declares that "every family has a right to an attractive dwelling place," and that "the state will make this right effective." The housing to meet this promise is to come from new construction plus the numerous upper class dwellings (about 5,000 in Havana) vacated by emigrés. The government has announced that monthly payments for occupancy will for the present be 10 percent of income. The poorest workers with the largest families get priority. Low-income families are now living in some of the most elegant apartment buildings of Havana, paying twelve to fifteen pesos per month, while their indignant and wealthy neighbors in similar quarters continue to pay their usual rentals of 150 to 200 pesos per month. As Fidel has said, this is a Revolution "of the poor, by the poor; and for the poor."

New housing construction competes with other projects, and there is no intention to solve the housing problem entirely before proceeding to industrialization. Nevertheless, a visible start is being made. A large suburb of apartment buildings and accompanying community facilities is nearing completion in East Havana, a choice location on the coast formerly reserved by Batista as one of his own private investments. This skyline, visible from Havana, is already an impressive token of the government's program in the urban housing field. The National Tourist Institute conducts weekend tours through the project, including inspections of model apartments furnished with all conveniences. Quality, rather than economy, is the dominant impression. Workers are to receive something worth waiting for. Fidel has said that 20,000 additional city dwelling units will be under construction or completed before the end of 1961. This will still be only a beginning on the huge task.

City workers have also been the beneficiaries of the conversion of many of the former aristocratic clubs, splendidly equipped, into Workers' Social Centers. These provide recreation, education, social life, and political indoctrination. More are being built, in every section of the larger cities, in every village, and near every sugar mill. Large signs mark the sites of centers still to come. Each is named for a revolutionary martyr. These projects are one of the dominant new features in the changing face of Cuba. They will undoubtedly come to serve an important function in enriching the lives of workers, complementing the factory or work center, and strengthening their political consciousness. They are a step in the implementation of the slogan that began to appear in March and now meets the eye everywhere: "Political and Economic Power in the Hands of the Workers." They are a Cuban adaptation of the Jacobin Clubs that drove the French Revolution forward by crystallizing, organizing, and focusing mass demands. Fidel is trying to prepare the working class to run the state. In the Workers' Social Centers they will find libraries designed to open their ears to the call and to teach them to use their class aspirations as a motor of progress. Discussions will be held, study fostered, political leaders tested and selected. Attached to each Center will be an "Infant's Circle," where care and play for children of working mothers will be provided by state employees at a nominal cost, proportioned to income. A few of these Centers are now functioning. The worker and his family will thus come to have an important community focus of interest and activity in which recreation is combined with education and civic responsibility.

Public beaches, one of the first programs of the Revolution, now ring the island. Sports centers and playgrounds are also being built, and new emphasis is placed on universal active participation of youth in sports. Cuba aspires to impress the world in years to come at Olympic games. This is recognized to be a test of the regime hardly less weighty with world opinion than the fighting spirit of its soldiers under attack. So a National Institute of Sports, Physical Education, and Recreation has been established to plan and foster public interest and development. Daily television programs show pictures of foreign

athletes in action. Cubans for the first time watched their own youth, 20,000 of them, boys and girls, perform athletic exercises in the May Day Parade. This is felt by all to begin the correction of a serious deficiency in Cuban national life. With more milk production and consumption, better diet, and mass participation in athletics now a part of the national plan, the Cuban people are laying the foundation for improving the health of the new generation.

Educational opportunities for working-class and country youth have been substantially increased. Before the Revolution some 70 percent of Cuban youth could not hope to go to high school, because such schools existed in only a half-dozen of the major cities of the island. High school study as well as university study was a financial impossibility for the majority of Cuban families. This problem is being met by building more high schools and by providing 15,000 all-expense scholarships in Havana for high school students from outlying areas. Similar programs are also getting under way at the three Cuban universities. Residence halls are being built for scholarship students. These awards, which are deliberately administered to bring to the campuses large numbers of working-class and peasant youths are already changing the character of the universities. To achieve this aim, prior preparation, still an upper-class monopoly, is given only minor consideration. For technical students there is the further prize of study abroad. The socialist countries have established 2,700 scholarships for Cubans.

Art, dance, theater, and music academies have been established in some of the vacated palaces of the Havana rich, with facilities for resident students. A search for promising talent is now going on. When their courses are completed, all expenses paid, the artists will be sent to cooperatives, people's farms, and Workers' Social Centers as resident teachers to conduct cultural programs and discover new talent.

These programs in combination offer such a rich variety of educational opportunity that Cuban youth is filled with optimism for the future. Children of the former privileged classes are likely to be exceptions. They are suspect, and they have lost expectancies. But even many of them, if they have not been carried off to Miami, are making the adjustment. For

others, the economic obstacles are disappearing; color bars have entirely disappeared; students can go as far as their talents will carry them, because this "superacion" is a part of civic duty in the new Cuba. This investment in people will some day bring major credit to the Revolution as more individual Cubans develop with their new opportunities and gain international recognition.

### **Industrialization**

Cuba's industrialization program has two principal aspects, factories already built by the Revolutionary Government and factories planned. In the first category are such modest achievements as cotton gins, canneries, feed mills, and textile factories. Until recently, industrialization was a branch of Agrarian Reform, and these first projects were designed to complement agricultural production. They created new uses for crops and additional employment opportunities in rural areas. Also, a new pencil factory has been completed, meeting some of the needs of the Year of Education now in progress.

The other principal immediate preoccupation of the first years has been to keep existing factories running, to salvage the existing economy from the effect of the loss of United States raw materials, spare parts, and markets. Before the Revolution, 70 to 80 percent of Cuba's imports came from the United States and 90 percent of Cuban exports went to the United States. The trade rupture ordered by the United States government, first by taking away Cuba's principal source of dollars, the sugar quota, and then by forbidding the shipment of United States goods to Cuba were heavy blows, calculated to paralyze the Cuban economy. They did not achieve that aim, but they made the industrialization program more difficult by adding to the problem of building new factories, the problem of converting the old units no longer dependent on United States supplies and services. This was not only a question of maintaining production but also of maintaining employment. It has not been easy to meet payrolls in factories that could not produce at normal levels for lack of customary supplies and equipment. A loss of trained engineers, both American and Cuban, who



might have contributed skills to the task of improvisation, added difficulties.

This crisis, on the other hand, has offered a challenge to workers and has undoubtedly hastened their development as leaders in the factories. The important role they must come to play in factory management motivated the formal creation at the beginning of 1961 of Worker-Technical Advisers, now a standard organism in all factories. These advisers are elected by vote of the workers in each section of the plant. Their task is to advise the managers and government delegates on technical problems of maintaining and improving production. They will also play a role in developing an economic plan. They are the economists' best source of information on factory capabilities; and, as respected workers, they are in a position to win worker cooperation in implementation of the plan. Many of these advisers will also receive training in the socialist countries. Some will then become managers of the new industries to be built with the help of credits, designs, and materials from the socialist bloc. From these factory-trained workers, Cuba hopes to develop a good part of the corps of technicians needed in the industrialization stage now opening.

Fidel has announced that 1962 will be the Year of the Economic Plan, following the Year of Liberation (1959), the Year of the Agrarian Reform (1960), and the Year of Education (1961). A new Ministry of Industry was created in February, headed by Ché Guevara, one of the three most important leaders of the Revolution. Guevara announced at a press conference that one billion pesos would be invested in industry during the period 1961-1965. This equals the entire United States investment in Cuba since 1900, little of which went into industry. Credits for factories, machinery, and equipment from the socialist countries will account for 600 million of the planned investment. The other 400 million will be accounted for by means of production of Cuban manufacture. Guevara has also emphasized that full employment, and not maximum production in the shortest possible time, is the primary aim of the Revolution. The modernization of existing industry with labor-saving machinery can only take place as more jobs become available for workers to be displaced. The particular, human

need for a job is a more immediate concern of the Revolution than raising the general standard of living through the increased productivity which mechanization makes possible.

Contracts with the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia call for an increase of 575,000 kilowatts in electrical power capacity, to operate mainly on the basis of oil driven generators. This will double present capacity. An additional oil refinery will be built, bringing Cuba's total to five. Explorations for oil and other minerals are now going on with the assistance of experts from the Soviet Union and Latin American countries. A capacity for steel production, also under contracts with the USSR, is to be built in three stages, the first, of 250,000 tons per year capacity, to be completed by 1965. No target dates have been announced for the second and third stages, which will raise capacity to 1,350,000 tons. The existing metallurgical industry, with a capacity of 40,000 tons in 1960, will be modernized during 1961-1962 to increase capacity to 200,000 tons per year. Cement production has already been increased from 600,000 tons to 1 million tons per year. Plants for the manufacture of spare parts for industrial and mining machinery, to be in operation by 1963, are also included in the agreements. Czechoslovakia has undertaken to provide Cuba with factories during 1961-1964 having the following output capacities on a one-shift per day basis:

Tractors, 3,000 per year

Trucks, 5,000 per year

Gasoline motors (stationary), 15,000 per year

Motorcycles and motor scooters, 3,000 per year

The Czechs have also agreed to provide an automobile factory with a capacity of 15,000 units per year, installation to begin in 1965.

In view of many imponderables, the dates specified in these contracts cannot be given much weight. The Cubans have not had enough experience in planning and construction to be able to measure their own capabilities accurately, nor can the socialist country experts know exactly what difficulties will arise. Also, the menace of attack, by keeping workers on military duty and disorganizing schedules, could continue to hamper development. If an attack comes, no one, of course, can foresee

its destructive effects. All plans have to be subject to that contingency.

Altogether, agreements for the delivery of approximately one hundred factories have now been negotiated with the socialist countries. These will manufacture such items as farm tools, bicycles, light bulbs, spark plugs, sewing machines, pumps, and spare parts for automobiles. More textile factories are to be built, so that by 1965 Cuba should be self-sufficient in textiles. A new National Industry for the Production of Domestic Equipment will build factories in Santa Clara, with Czech help, having the following capacities:

Refrigerators, 40,000 per year

Gas stoves, 45,000 per year

Pressure cookers, 100,000 per year

Washing machines, 40,000 per year

None of these items has been made in Cuba before. They can no longer be imported from the United States. The new factories will provide import-substitutes.

It is noteworthy that the first stage of Cuba's planned development includes the manufacture of these consumer items despite the lack of a heavy industry base. How is this possible? The explanation is both evident and significant. The socialist countries now have sufficient economic resources in heavy industry and trained technicians to underwrite a policy of servicing the developing economies of states trying to break free from the capitalist system. This slows to a certain extent the further development of the economies of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, since what Cuba receives is drawn from their common fund of industrial resources. But this can be a burden worth carrying; and the Cuban government, fighting for survival through its years of peril, has been diligent to prove itself worthy of sacrifices by its new friends. This is a factor that helps explain the uncompromising defiance of Washington by Fidel and his colleagues. All things considered, this is no evidence of fanaticism or suicidal tendencies, but a course of prudence at this stage, less perilous than an ambiguous and vacillating neutralism, which might mar the image of a Cuba worth defending at all costs. The attitude of the Soviet Union

towards Cuba is more a matter of concern in Havana than the attitude of the United States.

Cuban independence from the United States is possible only under the protection of the USSR. The euphoria of the present moment springs in part from the conviction, based on these economic contracts and on military aid promised and delivered, that Cuba has won the full confidence of the Soviet Union and its allies. All reports from the socialist countries would indicate that public opinion supports this burdensome and dangerous commitment expressed by Khrushchev to a tiny island in the backyard of the United States. This is an almost incredible development; it is a measure of Fidel's genius. The hostility of the United States government has thus been checked and neutralized in both the economic and military spheres. Cubans can now face the future with approximately the same confidence as the rest of mankind.

#### **The Attack on Illiteracy**

The literacy campaign, which is the principal feature of the Year of Education, is in full swing as these lines are written. There were over a million illiterates in Cuba in January 1961. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization estimated that eight to ten years would be required to wipe out such illiteracy. Fidel has said again and again, with no hedges, that it will be entirely wiped out by January 1, 1962. This "ridiculous" claim grows more realistic every day, and it is now a good bet that he will fulfill it, just as he gave Cuba an impossible liberation from Batista, foreign corporations, and the American Embassy in 1959, and an impossible Agrarian Reform in 1960.

Fidel has not underestimated the magnitude of the task. His difference from the skeptics is a difference in estimating the human resources available. Fidel has mobilized an army of 200,000 people, including 70,000 students from the 7th to 12th grades, to go into the country as volunteer "alphabetizers." The schools will remain closed from May 1 to November in order to allow teachers and students to complete this priority task. They wear uniforms, receive an allowance of ten pesos per month besides necessary supplies, and pass through a training course

before setting out. The boys go as individuals to live in the remotest huts, with the task of teaching all members of the host family to read and write. The girls live in groups under adult supervision in the villages.

How are these people received? Do illiterates want to learn to read and write? The fact is that the humble people of Cuba are probably more impressed by this campaign than anything the Revolution has done. This insight into their sense of values is one of Fidel's great discoveries. Learning to read and write, under the warm and human solicitude of a government that sends its teachers everywhere, is a joy to millions who find dignity in their own growth and in their sense of obligation to justify Fidel's confidence.

This campaign affects both teachers and taught. The bold tactic of mobilizing the adolescents caused some parents to gasp, and the Church played on this parental sensitivity to call the government irresponsible. Teachers in the Church schools discouraged participation by their students; teachers in the lay private schools, which serve the upper classes, were also generally obstructionist; and even in the state school system, the teachers at first showed little enthusiasm for a program that disrupted their own schedules and overestimated, in their opinion, the capacity and maturity of their students. (The Revolution has gone too fast for most school teachers who got their jobs and formed their habits under a regime that rewarded connivance in corruption.) The steam for the campaign came from the students themselves, inspired by Fidel and the other revolutionary leaders. They formed units of "Young Rebels" in the schools, enlisting volunteers and forcing reluctant teachers to show more spirited cooperation with the Revolution's educational goals. This initiative has been received with mixed feelings by the teachers, who see discipline and their own authority endangered; tensions prevailed in the schools during the final weeks. But despite this element of confusion, Fidel has won the enthusiastic cooperation of most of the youth in this heroic enterprise. As summer approaches it becomes harder for those on whom the government calls, an active age group, to bear the shame of remaining in the cities. Still, many parents with-

held their permission, and this the Government requires before accepting a volunteer.

These struggles and the hardships borne in the literacy campaign will make new militants and leaders for the Revolution, just as the program of adult volunteer teachers has already done. Fidel's strength lies partly in the mystical bonds of a fellowship of sacrifice. He teaches people to think about the wants of others, takes them out of their own narrow circles of self-interest, and carries them into commitment, exhilarating dangers, and the taste of nobility. Little wonder that the leaders, and even the citizens, of bourgeois societies, where the price tag is everything and nobility outdated, have trouble understanding these developments and predicting their course. It is of profound significance that the Cuban militiamen, the poorest of the poor, are volunteers who receive no pay. (Francis Powers flew over Russia for \$25,000 a year, not for a cause, and in a crisis he came to regret "ever having had anything to do with it.") Allen Dulles should read José Martí and Cervantes if he wants to gain some insight into Latin America. One of Martí's slogans, posted throughout Revolutionary Cuba is: "Only the dead have rights. We have only duties." Even Sancho Panza, despite all his discomforts, became an ardent devotee of the life of adventure and sacrifice taught him by Don Quixote. Fidel, with the clear vision of a scientist and the contagious passion of a prophet, has tapped this feudal strain in Cuban character as energy for his good works, not to fight windmills and imagined evils but to release captives from real chains while holding real giants at bay.

#### Who Hates the Revolution and Why

Political developments during the months since October, 1960, have brought a steady clarification of the nature of the Revolution and with this clarification an increase in the intensity of the struggle against it by its enemies, which has in turn solidified the ranks of the Revolution, as always happens in wartime, by making it a sacred cause under attack. The defense of the embattled Revolution has involved an acceleration of its development, which militants have taken in stride and even absorbed as a new source of strength. As the class char-

acter of the regime crystallized, leaving no hope of salvaging feudal and bourgeois privileges, the upper classes took more drastic steps, culminating in the invasion attempt of April. As freedom for the propagation of Marxist-Leninist ideas became more evident, the Church became more aggressive and openly counter-revolutionary. As evidence accumulated of the historic decision of Fidel and his colleagues to make full use of help—economic, diplomatic, and military—from the socialist countries, and as this friendship produced more concrete demonstrations of effective cooperation, the American government broke relations and declared its determination to rid the hemisphere of the Castro regime. These three springs of counter-revolution—the desperation of the old landed aristocracy and bourgeois plutocracy, the anxiety of the international Catholic Church, and the exasperation of the United States government under one more humiliation in its contest with the USSR—provide the dangers that condition the further development of the Revolution.

It is an impressive fact that streams of Cubans have emigrated. The American newspapers make the most of this migration to lead readers to believe that the Revolution is unpopular. Yet only 1½ percent of the population of Cuba is involved, though all are free to leave. Since this is a real revolution, which has destroyed an old system of property and privileges, many Cubans have material cause to be aggrieved. The revolutionary laws had a clear class content. They were laws for the humble, and the richer a Cuban had been the more he was hurt. The rich filled the airplanes for Miami, following the Batista police, army, and government officials who had run for their lives a few months earlier. As time went on, they were joined by the free entrepreneurs, the speculators, and the gamblers; businessmen who were no longer able to import their wares; factory owners who could not meet payrolls without raw materials from the United States; lawyers and accountants who had lost their clients; agents and factors who had lost their American principals; university professors who had defended the old regime or who could not accept the right of the Revolution to purge a faculty; judges who could not adapt to the spirit of the new laws; engineers and doctors who were caught up in the

exodus of their friends and clubmates and who counted on their skills to make an easy adjustment while the dust settled. The *New York Times* estimated that 13 percent of the emigrés were "workers, skilled and unskilled." But this includes servants who accompanied their employers, and workers who had turned themselves into speculators or businessmen. In general, it can be said that the migration simply reflects the uncompromising character of the Revolution in carrying through much-needed reforms. To those who have been hurt, it has seemed easier to adjust to life in a new country (while awaiting the "inevitable" day of return) than to adjust to a new life at home.

The battle on the beaches at Cienaga de Zapata was clearly a part of the Cuban class struggle. The public questioning of prisoners following their wholesale surrender left no doubt that the landowning and bourgeois classes had banded together to take on the worker and peasant militia. The disaster that ensued will doubtless discourage any further attempt by the Cuban emigrés to throw themselves under the wheels of the Revolutionary juggernaut. Internally, the victory consummated the Revolution, leaving the government stable as a rock, confident of mass support, and strong enough to be generous with its defeated enemies.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the Revolution cannot even now count on peace. It is not yet to be left alone to carry through its constructive plans so promisingly begun. For this prospect the United States is to blame. "Why must it be this way?" Cubans frequently ask me. "Why do not the American people compel their government to respect the principle of self-determination?" We must try to answer their questions.

Powerful American corporations are menaced by the success of the Cuban Revolution. The property interests involved are so great, when its impact on all of Latin America is considered, as to raise an inference that preventive investments are being made in the anti-Castro forces and in American public opinion. The Revolution made clear early in its career that property rights were to be subjected to severe limitations. The reform of electric and telephone rates cut into the profit levels of two American corporations, Electric Bond and Share and International Telephone and Telegraph. The expropriation of



land belonging to the sugar companies and later the sugar mills themselves affected 36 American enterprises. The liquidation of the latifundium system by means of expropriation of land in excess of 1,005 acres (30 *caballerías*) per estate, or in excess of 3,350 acres (100 *caballerías*) if the estate was intensively cultivated, also caused losses to Americans. The Cubans' decision to save dollars for industrialization by buying a portion of the island's crude oil needs from the Soviet Union in exchange for surplus sugar challenged the monopoly of the big capitalist oil corporations. The answering embargo on oil shipments to Cuba, which might have paralyzed the economy under a less resolute government, was met by the nationalization of the American refineries and agreements with the Soviet Union covering all Cuba's needs.

By this time it was perfectly clear that the Revolution meant to act in the economic sphere in ways that would break the hold of American corporations on the economy. As the struggle developed, the Cuban government, answering the United States embargo of October 19, 1960, finally took the step of nationalizing all American enterprises on October 24th. This would not be too serious if confined to Cuba, but if the bad example should spread to other countries in Latin America, and to other continents, the whole profit system of international capitalism would be menaced. The shareholders in these big American corporations which bring home millions of dollars every year for distribution to a small band of the American rich undoubtedly see a danger in Fidel Castro. Nor is this an imaginary danger. The Cuban Revolution threatens by the force of its example and by palpable achievements with nationalized resources to put an end to these parasitic dividends from American overseas investments. The Revolution has already performed so many impressive works and has gained so much momentum on other goals that Latin Americans aspiring to similar goals are clearly being "infected" with the example of Cuban technique.

The conference held in Mexico City in March, 1961, on the initiative of Lázaro Cárdenas, former President of Mexico, is a symptom of this infection. Speaker after speaker agitated for economic sovereignty, including nationalization of foreign

enterprises. The press every day reports new symptoms in the form of demonstrations, strikes, street corner meetings, attacks on United States embassies and consulates, victories for pro-Castro candidates in South American elections with a platform of "Cuba si, Yankees no!", and even pro-Castro statements by orthodox, opportunist politicians who keep a finger on the mounting pulse of their public. The Cubans have begun a process that will tend to spread, because it responds to general conditions and to a general popular desire. It is a modern expression of the old familiar yearning for self-determination. Since international capitalism is a single, articulated octopus with its tentacles planted throughout the continent, a wound in one quarter weakens the whole organism. Even if the poisoned arrows it has now received from little Cuba could be removed, a complete cure could not be effected. The octopus has been shown to be vulnerable and is now less feared though no less hated by its victims, who await the opportunity to dash in with new attacks until the wounds are mortal and the carcass ready for a museum. Readers of the MONTHLY REVIEW will not need to be persuaded that international capitalism is doomed. In this conviction they are at one with the vast majority of Latin Americans whatever their class and party.

But the American people do not see this so clearly, nor do they see the struggle of Latin Americans to recover their own resources as the dominant feature of the Cuban problem. If they did, the future would be less dangerous, war less likely, because the American corporations would be resisted by large sections of the American public in their attempt to engage the United States government in the struggle to save dividends for a handful of investors at the risk of a world war. The Standard Oil Company and Chase Manhattan Bank are not cherished symbols in the American consciousness, not fighting causes that are capable of rallying public opinion around dangerous enterprises. In contrast to the older European empires, the modern American empire, built on investments, puppet governments, and dollar diplomacy, developed without an ideology, without glory, without heroes in a popular tradition. Even Teddy Roosevelt fought, it was proclaimed, to free Cuba from the Spanish, not to subject it to American corporations.

American tradition as learned in school books is anti-imperialist. The Father of our country was a rebel against empire; our Declaration of Independence was a classic statement of the right of self-determination against domination from abroad. These influences in American education have conditioned the growth of international capitalism into an American empire. This has had to take place secretly, as it were, behind the backs of the American people. There is seldom a candid disclosure of the role of American business in Latin American politics. The United Fruit Company has to dominate the Guatemalan government with as much secrecy as it can preserve, knowing that there would be little popular support among Guatemalans or Americans for such practices.

The South Americans are now waking up to the realities of their subjection. The Cuban Revolution has tied liberation from underdevelopment to liberation from the United States, a connection that takes many Americans by surprise. If no more than this urge for independence were involved in the Cuban struggle with the United States, the American people would not respond at all warmly to the use of their government to resist nationalization and to defend big corporations now seen to be hated by the people who know them best from personal experience. Empire is not a matter of national pride with the American people, as it is with Europeans. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy was well received by the American people, though it purported to give the Latin Americans a freer hand to run their own affairs. The granting of independence to the Philippines was an occasion for increased self-esteem among Americans, who took it at its face value, unaware of the economic strings that remained; they rejoiced, feeling that this liberation was consistent with American tradition.

The United States government and the press do not deal with the problem in these terms. For the American people there has come to be something more at stake in Cuba than dividends for a few wealthy people who have plenty of other income. The Cuban Revolution is now a focus of the cold war with the Soviet Union. The American is willing to think about invading Cuba because this is connected with the world-wide struggle between his state and the Soviet Union. He sees that in Cuba

the Soviet Union has made a new friend, a potential ally in case of war; and such is the prejudice and the polarity of public opinion on the cold war that Americans are easily led to pronounce Fidel Castro an enemy on the simple demonstration that Khrushchev is his friend.

There are many factors that make it easy for the government, impelled by the corporations, to draw the American people along with it in this misguided and shameful crusade against what is a popular regime in Cuba. There is a pride of state with roots in human emotions that any government can exploit in the arena of international politics. Whatever the policies of the United States government, it is "our government," so it is said, and in this contest with the Soviet Union everyone must close ranks to present a united front against a mortal enemy.

Today the vast majority of the American people are blindly anti-Soviet, blindly in the sense that it never occurs to them coldly to compare Soviet policy with American policy and support whichever government seems better to serve the interests of mankind, including the American people. It would show an ignorance of human nature to believe that such an objective judgment can be made by any more than a small group of people at this time. Therefore where the Soviet Union is on one side of a question it is not difficult for the American government to carry the American people into a commitment to support the other side, whatever the merits of the question. This psychological fact in international politics is heavily involved in the Cuban problem.

#### **Fidel and the American People**

In fact, Fidel Castro has not done a single injury to the American people, who are not to be equated with the big investors affected by the Agrarian Reform and the other economic measures. It is not Cuba's fault that the American consumer no longer has access to Cuban sugar. The United States government canceled the sugar quota with the disingenuous explanation, probably believed by no one, that the Revolution imperiled Cuba's ability to deliver sugar in accordance with its quota. In fact, sugar production has gone up. Since this has

now been demonstrated, the quota ought to be restored, to the benefit of both Cubans and Americans.

It is also a deceit by the government to lead Americans to believe that they are not wanted or well treated in Cuba. The barrier against travel is raised only on the American side. The Cuban government tried persistently during 1959 and 1960 to promote travel by Americans, knowing that they would be favorably impressed by what they saw. Without exception, Cubans want the friendship of the American people. Even now they do not blame the American people for the policies of the American government. Some Americans, like some Cubans, have violated reasonable and necessary laws enacted to defend the Revolution from espionage, sabotage, invasion, terrorism, and bombardments. They have been detained and tried (never tortured) and punished, just as foreigners are punished in the United States when they violate the law. Some hostile journalists have been detained for reasonable periods on suspicion of violating the law. To exaggerate these measures of self-defense against a few active enemies of the government into a picture of general persecution of Americans in Cuba is another State Department deceit. There are between 500 and 1,000 Americans living in Cuba. They are treated with respect and consideration that increase, rather than decrease, when their nationality is known. During the Christmas holidays, Cuba received with warm cordiality the last large group of American visitors before the State Department barred further travel except "in the national interest," that is, in the government's interest. The State Department is not trying to protect Americans with its policy; it is trying to protect itself from discovery. How long will the American people allow themselves to be cheated this way? Incidentally, the Central Intelligence Agency would have known more about the true state of Cuban opinion toward Fidel Castro if travel had not been cut off. Men may hate the truth when it reproves, as Augustine said, but this is a dangerous weakness in an intelligence agency.

The State Department would like Cuba to be seen as a threat to the hemisphere. It is a threat to certain interests that to date have managed the affairs of the hemisphere. But this is not the same thing as a threat to the people of the hemisphere.

For them Cuba is an eye opener and this is all to their good. Cuba does not represent a threat of military attack. The great build-up of arms, including tanks, artillery, automatic weapons, and anti-aircraft batteries is a necessity for self-defense. The counter-revolution was bound to attack sooner or later; preparations against it were therefore to be expected. They warrant no inference of aggressive intentions. By contrast with this manifest effort the total lack of evidence of preparations that might indicate a plan to invade other countries, such as amphibious forces, paratroopers, and transport aircraft, must be interpreted. It is not consistent with the charge that Cuba plans military offensives against other governments. Even the build-up of the Cuban air force with Soviet MIG's, if this should take place, would not justify any preventive action. Cuba has reason to fear an attack by United States forces, which rely heavily on air superiority. It is only common prudence, and even a duty to the people of Cuba, to try to minimize that disadvantage with a strong Cuban force of fighter aircraft. Even a bomber force would not necessarily mean anything more than an intention to counterattack bases from which offensives are being launched against Cuba. The American people must be forewarned against the attempt to characterize Cuba as endangering international peace, as a military menace that provokes its own just destruction at the hands of the alert guardians of the peace and security of the hemisphere. When this course is proposed, let some evidence be presented, with an opportunity given to the Cubans to answer the charge, before releasing the impatient gendarmes for acts that would likely open World War III.

The Revolution does not increase the danger of an attack on the United States. The Soviet Union has no military bases in Cuba; and both Khrushchev and Castro have said repeatedly that there will be no such bases. American aircraft fly over Cuba at frequent intervals. If there were any evidence that such bases existed it would have been produced. (Incidentally, when Americans feel agitation about the prospect of Soviet bases in Cuba they might think about the desirability of relieving the Soviet people of a similar cause for agitation in the American bases that ring the borders of the USSR. This new understand-

ing of the provocative content of American policy, easily overlooked until now, could be used to bring public pressure on the American government for changes that would relieve tensions. The inconsistency is now too strong to be ignored or justified.)

### Choosing a Mate

Fidel turned to the USSR because he needed help in carrying through a Revolution urgently desired by the great majority of the Cuban people, and because he found the USSR able and willing to give him all sorts of aid on satisfactory terms. The popular, anti-capitalist character of the Revolution made the American corporations and the American government hostile. There was no other source of help. The neutral bloc of states, Egypt, India, Indonesia, were themselves too hard-pressed to have any surplus as a source of strength for another puny state in the worst of circumstances, deprived of the bulk of its markets in the dollar area, yet eager to embark as a fledgling on a program of industrialization. History watched to see whether one more brave new revolutionary program would perish under these hard realities. Either Fidel was to be remembered as an honest revolutionary, or he was to conciliate the American government by compromising the Revolution to death. To choose the former, the hard course of integrity, necessarily meant accepting the help of the Soviet Union. This is the simple and clear way in which the Cuban people, as surprised as everyone else by the rapidity of events, justify his decision.

Many of the political developments inside Cuba during the past few months were engendered by the decision. It was necessary to win public support for the new relationship. This involved changing the public image of the Communist countries from the ugly and fearsome caricature inherited from the past to that of a strong, humane bloc of powers that could be trusted to give the new Cuban government the help and respect denied by the United States. Since this is precisely the image the USSR has been laboring for years to fashion, both with works and words, with policy and propaganda, all the Cuban government had to do to fill the streets, the theaters, the television screens and the airwaves with advertisements of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries was to open the gates and let the

tide flow in. This was a second decisive measure determining the course of events. Americans had a slight taste of this in Mr. Khrushchev's first visit to the United States in the autumn of 1959. Despite the many barriers kept between him and the American public, he and his wife succeeded in conveying the impression that Communists might be decent human beings after all. In Cuba all barriers were removed, and the Cuban people were invited to look at the world, including socialist achievements, through Communist eyes.

A Russian Exposition in Havana in March, 1960, and a visit by Anastas Mikoyan opened the courtship. Both parties expressed their satisfaction with each other, though the neighbors were indignant and the lord of the manor, having other plans, withheld his approval. Nevertheless, the affair whirled forward at a shameless pace, without blushes and with impetuous initiatives first from one side and then the other. Full diplomatic relations were established in May, 1960, but aid was already gestating and began to arrive almost before the Ambassador was at his post. Since then economic agreements and declarations of support have followed in a steady stream. Numerous parties of Cuban officials have visited the socialist countries, including one, headed by Ché Guevara, that spent two months coordinating Cuba's economic needs with socialist capabilities.

During the past six months the best movies produced in the USSR, China, and the Eastern European countries have pushed Hollywood into the background. They have had long, repeated runs in the capital cities, circulated to the smaller towns, and appeared on the featured evening television programs. A high percentage of Cubans, probably not less than 75 percent, have now seen one or more of such moving and humane productions as *Ballad of a Soldier*, *The 41st*, *Heroic China*, *Seriocha*, *Lenin in October*, *Lenin in 1918*, *Potemkin*, *Chapaiev*, *The Letter That Was Not Sent*, *Alexa Dunditch*, and *Immortal Garrison*. The best Soviet artists of folk music, ballet, and orchestra have played long stands in Havana, at popular prices, broadcast on television. The Chinese Opera toured the island, winning extraordinary acclaim. Rostropovich, the Russian cellist, started his series of concerts in the cane fields. He



gave free lessons to Cuban cellists between performances. A troupe of Soviet male and female gymnasts created a sensation in January 1961. Their final performance was an affair of state, attended by Fidel, the Ministers, and a packed house, televised and eulogized. This visit gave the Cubans the impetus to start their own sports program.

It is not hard to praise these artists, nor to be impressed by the quality and the variety of socialist achievements in the world of culture. The newspapers and commentators let this praise pour forth. Blended with the sense of pleasure stirred by a good performance was the recollection that behind the artists were peoples and governments committed to helping Cuba in its struggle for independence. Audiences with tears streaming cheered the artists, and the artists cheered the audience with no less warmth and emotion. These theater scenes were political events. They ratified a new alliance and started a love affair between peoples that continues to grow deeper day by day.

In March, 1961, the Chinese impressed Havana with an exhibition of their industrial advances. This display of machines, buses, trucks, radios, books, and hundreds of other items of Chinese manufacture was seen by at least a half million Cubans, as many as could file through in the two weeks it was open. A sign of the times was the prevalence of buttons worn by Cubans thereafter, showing a red Chinese flag beside the Cuban flag.

By the time Yuri Gagarin made the first successful trip into space in April, 1961, it had become habitual for the Cubans to derive joy from socialist triumphs. The celebration of this new feat seemed natural and spontaneous. It was a victory for a champion the Cubans had come to regard as their own. It quieted any doubts, if any still remained, that the future belongs to the socialist countries, and that though Fidel had not yet said it, Cuba would sooner or later be numbered among them. It was therefore a Cuban triumph, too, and a victory over the old bully to the north.

On the newsstands and at the bookstalls, reflections of the same process appeared. The Cuban National Press published paperback editions in Spanish of two books of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, *Fundamentals of Marxist Philosophy* by F. V. Konstantinov and *Manual of Political Economy*; also the

*Communist Manifesto* and Lenin's *State and Revolution*. These books are on prominent display at virtually all bookstalls throughout Havana and, to a somewhat lesser extent, in other parts of Cuba. They are being widely read, by people who a year ago had never read a line of Communist literature. Pamphlets in Spanish translation of the principal writings of Lenin, Stalin, and Mao Tse-tung are also available in abundance, published by the Foreign Language Publishing Houses of the USSR and China and by the Cuban Communist Press.

These books simply joined the other titles left over from the days before the big transformation began. Anti-Communist books have not been removed from display. The tables of a Cuban bookstore are a picture of freedom and variety of opinion not to be found in the United States. Lenin and Stalin stand next to Papal Encyclicals, Milovan Djilas, and Arnold Toynbee. However, this wealth of choice is likely to be transitory, since books formerly imported from the dollar areas will not be replaced due to foreign exchange difficulties. There is a certain ironic justice in this unforeseen consequence of the high-handed acts of Congress and the President. Because the Cuban sugar quota was abolished American authors cannot reach the Cuban public unless they are taken up by a Cuban publishing house for translation. Only strongly anti-capitalist books are apt to be so favored in the period that lies ahead.

This freedom for the circulation of Communist ideas and this opportunity to impress Cubans with socialist achievements not only strengthened general public approval for Fidel's foreign policy. It also had profound effects on the attitude of Cubans toward domestic aspects of the Revolution. As the socialist countries, governed by Communist parties, gained in prestige, socialist and Communist principles acquired respectability. The circulation of *Hoy*, the official newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party, increased from 45,000 to 215,000 between December, 1960, and May, 1961. Speeches by leaders of the Party, Blas Roca, Lazaro Pena, Anibal Escalante, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, drew large crowds, though they hold no government offices. Anniversaries of Communist martyrs were commemorated with significant respect; the mention of their names evoked significant applause.

"Unity" had always been a principle of the Revolution. This meant that all parties supporting the Revolution should avoid public criticism of each other. Since the Communist Party had thrown its support to Fidel while the guerrilla struggle against Batista was still being fought in the mountains, it had earned a place in the Revolutionary front. Anti-Communism was counter-revolutionary. Leaders enforced this rule on those elements in the ranks of the Revolution who were hostile to the Communists. This unity was undoubtedly one of the sources of strength of the revolutionary forces. If members of the 26th of July Movement and the Revolutionary Directorate, the two principal militant groups that supported Fidel, had been free to attack Communists, counter-revolutionary forces would very likely have been able to take advantage of this division. The fact that Communists were protected by Fidel and "Unity," from anti-Communist sniping, not only facilitated their work for the Revolution; it enabled them to acquire respectability and to emerge as a party of patriotism, the authentic spokesman of the proletariat. They also enjoyed an access of credit from the changing public attitude toward the Soviet Union, with whom they were more or less identified in the public mind, as Communist parties are in all countries. This identification changed from a liability to an asset.

But this change in the popular attitude toward the Communists was not primarily a victory of *Hoy* over the other newspapers, nor a victory of Communists over anti-Communists. Reports in the American press that Communists had infiltrated the government and were taking it over do not give an accurate account of what has been happening. There has not been any significant redistribution of posts. The dominant feature of this development was the change in the line of non-Communists. The necessities of the Revolution and the growing contacts with the socialist countries produced what appears to have been a mass conversion to a Marxist-Leninist ideology. Little by little *Revolucion* and *Combate*, newspapers that support the Revolution as spokesmen for the 26th of July Movement and the Revolutionary Directorate, both non-Communist, began to add to their characteristic columns of chauvinism and repetitive tirades against Batista a more penetrating class analysis of the

problems of the Revolution. They stuck with Fidel as he began to talk in terms of a working-class state, with governmental power frankly employed by a supreme proletariat, not only in behalf of liberty and sovereignty against foreign imperialists and their local agents, but also against other class oppressors. The goal became a classless society where "exploitation of man by man" would be ended. Though Fidel has never used the Leninist term "dictatorship of the proletariat," many of his speeches express, always in his own language, Leninist political principles of working-class rule over the revolutionary process. His fresh phraseology, free of pedantry and dogmatism, echoes his own experience rather than his reading. This vital quality, combined with his clarity and his tremendous moral authority resting on a proven integrity, make all his words persuasive, even irresistible to all who listen to him.

As the Leninist content of his thought developed naturally and found expression in his fluent words, the non-Communist press developed with him, as did his Ministers, none of whom belong to the Communist Party. The steady course of the Revolution toward Leninist socialism is due to the hand of Fidel Castro, not of the Communist Party, at the helm of the Cuban state. To find in this process anything sinister and devious, a "capture" of Fidel by a diabolically clever group able to change a good man into a traitor to his own cause, is completely to miss the point. Fidel did not "betray the Revolution," as Cardinal Spellman, the Cuban Girondists in Miami, and the Voice of America like to charge. He returned blow for blow and kept pace with the dialectical development of the Revolution itself.

Conditions and his own character made Fidel a kind of Marxist-Leninist. Some will say that this proves their case against him; that history will repudiate him for that bad end. I would say rather that Fidel has made history with *Fidelismo*, and that his own achievements will permanently reflect credit on the ideology he expresses. If this resembles Marxism-Leninism, this resemblance will henceforth prove a new source of strength to the Marxist-Leninists rather than dim the luster of *Fidelismo*. While the United States government thinks it can discredit Fidel by proving him to be a virtual Communist, it

may be that they are building up Communism by proving that in fact it is *Fidelismo*.

This surprising turn of events is already observed in Cuba, where the charge that Fidel is a Communist has also been a principal weapon of the counter-revolutionaries. In December, 1960, a folk jingle was born saying that "if Fidel is a Communist, put me on the list too, because I'm with him." In fact, the process we are now examining, the spread of the Marxist-Leninist ideology in Cuba during the period October, 1960, to May, 1961, was accelerated by the charge, aimed at discrediting Fidel, that he had become a Communist. The great majority of Cubans now respond to this identification with a prejudice in favor of Communism. If the identification does not trouble him, neither does it trouble them, and Communism stands in a new light for the millions devoted to Fidel. If the State Department thinks this charge now disturbs Cubans, its agents should question a random sampling of city and country folk in Cuba and discover for themselves how this word has lost its power to traduce. They might also note how the street-corner novelty vendors, sensitive to their popular market, have added hammer and sickle buttons to Cuban flags and pictures of Fidel. All are selling well in a free market.

The question arises whether *Fidelismo* may not do the same service for Communism in the rest of Latin America, if the State Department continues to insist on the identification. If the people of other Latin American countries, attracted as they clearly are by Fidel in greater numbers than the Communists ever won by themselves, now come to believe that *Fidelismo* and Communism are equivalent, the result may be a sharp increase in the ranks of the Communist parties. "Unity" in Cuba, an essential element in *Fidelismo*, serves both Fidel and the Communists. Where there is no Fidel, Communist parties may reap the entire harvest. If the State Department wants to fight the Communist parties, it is folly to give them Fidel Castro as a recruiting agent.

In the early stages of Fidel's administration, there were millions of *Fidelistas* in Cuba and not many Communists. There are still millions of *Fidelistas* and they now talk and write very much like the Communists. A stranger arriving in Havana

would now have some difficulty distinguishing the official Communist Party newspaper from the others. All six now deal with problems in similar terms, though they continue to be written and edited by personnel with the same variety of formal political affiliations as before, people who have never belonged and do not now belong to the Communist Party. The remaining differences do not involve attitudes toward the Soviet Union or Hungary or Dag Hammarskjöld or the Congo or toward the supreme role of the proletariat in the new Cuba. On these issues the entire press agrees with Communist interpretation and goals.

But there are differences. Tito and the Yugoslavs receive kind treatment at the hands of the non-Communist press; while *Hoy* either ignores them or is hostile. (The government maintains friendly relations with Yugoslavia.) There is also a difference in the timing of reactions to some of Fidel's announcements, reflecting the subordination of *Hoy* to a party while the other editors have more autonomy. Notable examples were Fidel's ultimatum to the United States Embassy in January to reduce its personnel to eleven, the number in the Cuban Embassy in Washington, within 48 hours, and "if they all want to leave, let them leave." (They all did leave; the United States responded by breaking relations). *Hoy* printed the text of the speech with no comment on these important passages, which *Revolucion* carried in bold headlines. And when Fidel announced in April that the Revolution was "socialist," *Hoy* was not ready with an editorial analysis until several days later, while the other newspapers immediately trumpeted the news with columns of joy. The inference from these two episodes is that Fidel is by no means taking orders from the Communist Party, but that the Party is sometimes caught by surprise and must adjust its own line to the original political genius of Fidel.

Another remarkable characteristic of the process of development was the increasing respect paid to Communist martyrs by the non-Communist Ministers, who found the general public ready to cheer a change of heroes. The class struggle in Cuba is also a contest between statues. Commemoration of the dead is a more frequent practice than in the United States; and anniversary ceremonies are charged with political significance.

"Unity" behind the Revolution was now expressed by opening the pantheon to the Communist dead. These heroes, resurrected to receive belated homage, won battles as monuments and memories that they had lost while alive. In January, 1960, Armando Hart, the Minister of Education, spoke at the University of Havana on the anniversary of the martyrdom of Julio Antonio Mella, Communist student leader murdered in Mexico City. Hart evoked stormy applause when he said that the Cuban Revolution was fulfilling Mella's progressive struggle for a better Cuba. The Foreign Minister, Raul Roa, spoke at a ceremony honoring another Communist martyr, the poet Ruben Martinez Villena. The Communists contributed to unity by honoring the non-Communist martyrs, such as José Antonio Echevarria, founder of the Revolutionary Directorate, and Camilo Cienfuegos, a popular commander of the Rebel Army. In these joint ceremonies unity was forged to the degree that Communist speakers ceased to be distinguishable from non-Communist.

A climactic moment in this process came in a speech by Faure Chaumon, Cuban Ambassador to the Soviet Union and another founder of the non-Communist Revolutionary Directorate, on March 13, 1961, when he referred to Cuban revolutionaries as "we Communists." This may have been an ironic show of indifference to the enemy's tactic of charging the Revolution with Communism. But Chaumon went on to say that students will inquire how it was that the whole people of Cuba, even the children, became Communist; and that in the near future the other peoples of the continent would also become Communist. These surprising remarks from a public figure never identified with the Communist Party pleased the crowd. Their long applause, with Fidel on the platform, could only mean that this typical Cuban audience was ready for the most scandalous announcements imaginable.

In fact, however, Fidel made no reference to Chaumon's remarks in his own speech that followed a few moments later, nor has he ever characterized the Revolution as Communist. He now describes it as "patriotic, democratic, and socialist." This is more accurate, as well as less provocative. The Cuban state is certainly not Communist, though Communists are pleased with

it and see it moving toward Communism, still far away, at a satisfactory pace. In the meantime Cuba can be expected to pursue a course similar, though with important specific differences, to that laid out by Communist parties of other states in the socialist camp. This policy clearly has the approval of the great majority of the Cuban people, who now see in the other socialist countries a model more worthy of emulation than the United States. As an autonomous satellite, Cuba has deliberately changed orbits in order to revolve around a more benevolent sun.

### **The Role of the Communist Party**

It is hard to say how much Fidel owes to the Partido Socialista Popular, the official name of the Cuban Communist Party. The Party has wisely refrained from petty bickering about its contribution to the military victory of the Rebel Army over the Batista forces. And the Party has deliberately effaced itself, as a contribution to unity in the revolutionary coalition. At the close of his report to the National Committee on January 25, 1961, Blas Roca, Secretary General, said:

Some have asked why we have not spoken of the role played by the [Communist] Party in this or that task. We have not and we should not speak of the particular role of the Party, because the decisive factor is revolutionary unity, revolutionary coordination. If our Party has any special merit it lies in having tenaciously promoted revolutionary unity . . . in having made unity possible by its conduct, by its firm rejection of all sectarian pressures and of all dogmatic pretensions to impose this or that line.

The Party, aware that one of the obstacles to fulfillment of the process of public re-education about the Soviet Union and socialism was the residue of anti-Communist obscurantism, which caused people to balk from habit at the word "Communist" and at a Communist party, remained off stage while the drama unfolded with a very satisfactory plot. But at the same time members of the Party have worked hard at the grass roots level to consolidate the Revolution and strengthen its base in the working class. The present stability and momentum of the Revolution is partly due to their work. The Revolution does not defend itself spontaneously. Initiative and effort lie behind



crucial achievements: the growth of the volunteer militia to several hundred thousand men and women; the organization of Committees of Vigilance and Defense of the Revolution in nearly every city block and factory; the relentless vigilance of these committees against sabotage; the maintenance of production in the factories by sheer will power, individual resourcefulness, and sacrifice pitted against material shortages produced by the embargo, the lack of technicians, and the sabotage of machinery by counter-revolutionaries. Success in all these tasks depended on cooperation and active support among the workers. The Revolution has faced a difficult, and potentially dangerous, problem in the attitude of city workers. While for the most part they love Fidel as the orator and guerrilla fighter and valiant David who regularly routs Goliath, as the "sardine who eats the shark," they have been slow to acquire a consciousness of their own indispensable role in the Revolution, with its burdens and opportunities. The initiative for the transition to a workers' state has come from bourgeois leaders of the Revolution, not from a politically conscious working class. This base has had to be prepared hurriedly to receive and support its superstructure. Worker indifference (or perhaps "shyness," as Lenin called it) became a serious problem as the glow of excitement at Fidel's guerrilla victory burned out and the hardships in the new situation accumulated.

In contrast to the country workers, the city workers have not yet received sufficient material fruits from the Revolution to be bound to it by palpable benefits. Wages have been frozen; unemployment and underemployment in the cities continue to be high; the cut in rents and utility rates, a quick and substantial gain for the worker at one stroke, was forgotten as the new rates became standard; the Urban Reform Law increased the monthly cost of housing by changing tenants into owners obligated to pay upkeep and taxes; the cost of beer and rum went up as a result of new taxes; the cost of food rose slightly; a soap shortage brought the irritations of the "cola," the waiting in line to get in on the sale of a limited supply always exhausted within a few minutes of delivery; and, most important of all, the Revolution put an end to corrupt practices which in the Batista days increased the incomes of a large number of workers.

For example, bus drivers and conductors no longer are able to pocket a portion of the fares they collect. Formerly, this tolerated embezzlement was counted as a part of income. Petty bribery to workers, the gratuity that used to be paid by the customer in order to get priority or even to get attention, such practices have ended or are gradually disappearing. Thousands of workers have paid for a new self-respect with this loss of income. Needless to say, feelings are mixed about such changes. The material gains from the Revolution which will make good these losses lie in the future, beyond a difficult struggle in adverse conditions to increase productivity. In the meantime, there is money waiting to tempt anyone, including workers, who will fight the Revolution with sabotage and terrorism.

The best paid workers, the labor aristocracy, have been susceptible to the divisionist line that nationalization of industry will hamper their customary freedom to win larger benefits for themselves by strikes and bargaining. The Electrical Workers Union, one of the best organized and best paid, in December, 1960, paraded in Havana with banners opposing the government. In such circumstances the contest for support from the workers has not been easy, nor is it yet safely won. Furthermore, it is not enough that workers refrain from opposition. For the Revolution to succeed in its goals, they must work with more zeal, more conscience, more sacrifice than ever before. They must drop the old practices of slowdown and irresponsibility, cultivated for years as weapons in the class struggle, and develop a positive attitude toward work. They must not only tend their machines; they must tend them with a new initiative and resourcefulness if the spare parts problem is to be solved and production increased. And they must also be moved to defend the Revolution with arms by joining the militia. Such active support depends on political consciousness, understanding, and vision.

Fidel makes a large contribution with his speeches. But these have to be supplemented by the personal labor of organization at the factory level. It is this need that the Communists are filling, with great credit to themselves and benefit to the Revolution. They serve in the militia and recruit their friends to do the same. They organize the Vigilance Committees. They

watch over production. It is an old story, recalling the hard-earned prestige of the Communists in movements of resistance to occupation forces during World War II. Communist virtues are discipline, organization, loyalty, and a more than ordinary willingness to work. These virtues plus their unique contacts with the working class have steadily enhanced their importance to the Revolution. The new phase, the Socialist Revolution, in which the working class is actually to take over political power, is bound also to increase the power of the only working-class party.

As these lines are written, the consequences at the top levels are not yet visible. There certainly has been no delivery of the government into the hands of the Communist Party, nor even any indication that it is about to receive a call. It is the national federation of labor unions, the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC), that has emerged into more prominence as the recognized representative of the working class. The CTC organized the huge May Day parade that celebrated both the victory over the invasion at Cienaga de Zapata and the transition to socialism. Pictures of Marx and Mao Tse-tung, red banners, Lenin buttons, and international proletarian slogans including "Workers of the World Unite" in giant letters behind the reviewing stand, left no doubt as to the sentiments of the CTC. Also, the CTC organized the public dance in the streets of Havana to celebrate Fidel's reception of the Lenin Peace Prize. Perhaps this indicates that the Communist Party will continue to stay in the background.

There will probably be a formal fusion of all revolutionary parties, including the Communist Party, into one party that will henceforth administer the country. It would be very surprising if this sooner or later did not bring top Communists into the government. This will not signal any change in policy, however. We have seen that the non-Communist Ministers under Fidel's direction have already taken Cuba on a course pronounced "correct" by the world Communist movement. Furthermore, it is inconceivable that Fidel would accept, or that the Party would ask him to accept, subordination to its collective judgment. When anything important comes up, it is Fidel's habit to direct it personally and to rely on his own judgment

for the big decisions. It is a weakness in the Revolution to be dominated by one man; but since that man happens to be Fidel Castro it is a weakness all friends of the Revolution, including the Communists, abide without complaint. He is still the unchallenged "maximum leader" of the Cuban state. No one else has his gift for interpreting and articulating the will of the Cuban people. There is, in fact, a risk that Cuban dependence on him will hamper the dispersion of authority needed for efficient administration and the training of other leadership.

The change to a one-party system will evoke new charges of "totalitarianism," already heard, from people who claim that a multi-party system is indispensable to democracy. Before accepting that charge it would be well to see how the single party functions, what diversity of opinion it permits, what channel for popular initiatives it creates, what popular participation in the political process it fosters. Fidel, like Franklin D. Roosevelt, hears the charge of "dictator" from his enemies; nevertheless, he is undoubtedly administering a program that has the support of the great majority of the Cuban people. If he is a dictator, he is a popular one, dictating to a minority who would like to have, not democracy, but a return to freedom of exploitation.

It is also premature to demand elections. These will come in time. (It was thirteen years before elections were held in the new republic after the outbreak of the American Revolution.) Elections to important administrative posts in the factories and the cooperatives are already being held. It would be a distraction from more urgent tasks to organize national elections at the present time. They are not that important to Cubans, who associate elections with Batista, bourgeois-landlord rule, and corruption. Americans are also in a position to see through the cry for elections. Election day in the United States, though certainly as exciting as the World Series, does not give voters much choice between candidates. They have no more than a veto over the worse of two people who are very much alike. This is enough to keep people in the illusion that they somehow control the government. Why is it that the rich, the shareowners, the landowners, the lawyers, salesmen, and businessmen hold all the important offices after an American election? The people they actually represent are a small minority of the total population.

The Cubans, with good reason, are not impressed by the American system of elections, which merely serves as a safe way for the bourgeoisie, putting nothing at hazard, to claim a mandate from the returns, whoever wins.

Fidel does not need a mandate. The people give it to him every day in direct ways. It may be said they have no choice. People with arms in their hands always have a choice. In no country are arms so widely distributed as in Cuba. An unpopular government could not survive in this sea of rifles and machine guns. When the counter-revolutionaries landed in Cienaga de Zapata they expected these arms to be turned against the government. Instead, the vote of the militia, the people in arms, was unanimous, a vote for Fidel and the Revolution dealt with unmistakable precision. This is the vital mandate for the moment. There will be a time for elections, but this is strictly a matter for the Cubans themselves to determine.

#### Relations with the Church

The relationship of the Revolution with the Catholic Church has moved steadily from bad to worse over the past few months. This was probably inevitable, given the character of the forces in the struggle. The Cuban Church was a well-paid servant to the upper classes, the big landowners and the big bourgeoisie of the cities. It built numerous churches in the elegant Miramar district of Havana, where the Cuban rich lived, but seldom sent a priest into the countryside. It maintained private schools where the tuition and the location assured that the student body would be from the wealthier classes. It administered its rites in accordance with the amount it was paid. The poor acquired the habit of doing without the Church, where their poverty served as a basis for humiliating discrimination from the cradle to the grave.

When the Revolution took on a strongly class character, the Church found itself with its own class, in the camp of the counter-revolution. This bothered many of the bourgeois revolutionaries, and Fidel made every effort to avoid a struggle with the Church. He is very respectful of religious sentiments and has never scandalized anyone by professing atheism. But neither is he a Catholic of the sort to reassure the Church. Although he

spent his high school years under the supervision of Jesuits at Belen School in Havana, they can hardly be satisfied with the results of their indoctrination. He never attends mass. He speaks of religion as being strictly a private matter, with Protestants and atheists deserving the same respect as Catholics. He invited Protestant ministers, as well as Catholic priests, to join the guerrilla forces that fought in the Sierra Maestra. As the thorough revolutionary dedicated to the destruction of the old regime, it is not surprising that he came to clash with the hierarchy that persistently gave its blessing to Batista.

Fidel showed unusual restraint toward the Church as it became openly hostile to him. This was the one challenge to the Revolution that he was slow to answer. His other enemies, the United States corporations and government and the Cuban upper classes, never saw him turn away from a fight. In fact he promoted the Revolution with the help of their opposition, which seemed to prove his charges of exploitation by the rich and by the foreign imperialists. He plainly did not relish the struggle with the Church, but in the end he could not avoid it. The Church's attacks on Communism broadened to include the government that enforced "Unity" on revolutionaries. The Church gave Fidel the choice of repudiating the Communists or facing its own outright opposition. It was the Church hierarchy and not the Communists who brought Fidel to the crisis. The Communist Party was showing prudent respect for Catholicism in the autumn of 1960, saying that it would help people build churches if they wanted them. It was not saying that a good Catholic could not be a good revolutionary. It was supporting Fidel's attempt to bind atheists, Catholics, and Protestants in a unified revolutionary front. Certainly no one was saying that only an atheist could be a good revolutionary. Yet the Church declared war on the government because it accepted atheist support. Rather than defend the Revolution in company with atheists, the Church condemned the government for forbidding Catholic revolutionaries to criticize the Communists openly. The issue crystallized around the "Unity" slogan, "to be anti-Communist is to be counter-revolutionary," which several government officials had expressed publicly. One of the decisive moments of the Revolution came in Fidel's answer to a letter

from the Church hierarchy calling upon him to say whether this slogan had his approval. He replied: "Yes, to be anti-Communist is to be counter-revolutionary . . ." At this point he was interrupted by enthusiastic applause, but finally managed to conclude his sentence: ". . . just as to be anti-Catholic is counter-revolutionary; and to be anti-anything else if it divides the people."

From that moment the Church waged a relentless campaign, in pastoral letters read from the pulpit, in the pages of *Quincena*, a bi-weekly Church magazine, and its schools. The effects of this campaign were threefold:

(1) It caused some of Fidel's remaining support among the bourgeoisie, already unstable for other reasons related to private property and income, to take the road to Miami. Workers were not affected, both because they had nothing to fear and everything to hope for from the Revolution's future development; and because the priests had no established contact with the workers.

(2) It also caused some Catholic revolutionaries to defy the priests. This struggle produced astonishing scenes in the churches, where loyal revolutionaries sang the national anthem in response to the pastorals and fights broke out between those who sang and those who would not sing. Catholic revolutionaries removed Catholic stickers and placards from their automobiles and doorways; those that remained were taken to express a hostility toward the government.

(3) It removed one of the last brakes on the shift toward a straightforward working-class Revolution, since Fidel had been forced publicly to choose between Communist and Church, that is, upper-class, support. His reluctance to offend the Church had formerly operated as a restraint on his giving expression to swelling popular disdain for the priests. We have already seen how the crowds were cheering every mention of the Communists; now they also had an opportunity to cheer Fidel's scorching retorts to the Church. In the popular repertory of revolutionary chants the priests soon joined the "Yankee imperialists," the "Batistianos," "the thieves," and the "lati-

fundistas." The early version of a chant used the words:

Fidel, seguro	Come on, Fidel
A los yanquis dale duro.	To the Yankees give 'em hell.

Once the Church had forced the issue and Fidel had spoken out against the hierarchy these lines were altered, as if spontaneously, to:

Fidel, seguro	Come on, Fidel
A los curas dale duro.	To the priests give 'em hell.

The crowds seemed to enjoy the new state of the contest quite as much as the earlier one. In fact, on several occasions calls came from the crowd and chants arose against the priests while Fidel talked about other problems. The crowds pressed him to treat the Church as an enemy. By putting itself across the path of the Revolution, the Church discovered how shallow are its roots in Cuban society.

More than half the 700 priests in Cuba were Spanish until the crisis of the past few weeks. Their sermons, delivered with the characteristic Castilian lisp of z's and c's, were a constant reminder of their foreign origin. Most of the principal offices in the hierarchy were occupied by Spaniards. Even Cuban priests cultivated a Castilian pronunciation. This cherished connection of the Cuban Church with Spain became in revolutionary times a liability rather than an asset. It was natural to connect Franco, the prince of counter-revolution, with every Spanish priest. "Curas falangistas" became the standard term of reference, one which sorted well with "Batistianos" and other expressions of contempt. Another popular jingle said:

Que los curas corten caña	Let the priests cut cane
O se vayan para España.	Or go back to Spain.

Our children returned from the public school singing another (learned from their playmates, not from the teacher):

My mama ("my grandmother," "my aunt" in successive verses) does not want me  
To go to church  
Because the falangist priests  
Will convert me into a terrorist.



When the invaders at Cienaga de Zapata were rounded up, two priests were found among them, both Spaniards. One of them had served with Franco's army. Priests had already been arrested during the preceding weeks on suspicion of aiding and abetting terrorists. They were also known to be obstructing the enlistment of student volunteers for the literacy campaign. At the May Day mass meeting in Civic Plaza the axe fell. Fidel announced that all private schools would be nationalized and that henceforward religious instruction must be confined to the churches. He also advised the Spanish priests who opposed the Revolution to "pack their bags." Subsequent announcements indicate that the Government has withdrawn their permission to be in Cuba, thus effectuating their expulsion. They leave under an accumulation of popular contempt. In the May Day parade, two actors dressed as priests passed through the streets bestowing benedictions on a figure dressed in the caterpillar camouflage of the invaders. Around them were the "politiqueros," bigshot politicians with their diamond studded girlfriends; the "señoritos," the teen-age set from the private schools dancing American jitterbug; and a figure of Uncle Sam decorated with the dollar sign. In this hour of victory, the joyful Cuban people were mocking the groups they looked upon as the defeated oppressors. Included were the black-frosted priests.

If this seems shocking to Americans, it is because they are out of touch with the Cubans. Democracy in Cuba, expressed in direct ways, through mass meetings and roars of approval, has passed judgment on the Church. It is a just judgment, based on well-known facts. The Church took sides against the working class in a civil struggle. It lost and no longer shares the rule of society. It can now return to its proper sphere. Fidel has frequently reminded the priests that Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world." The Church can still recover a protected and respected status for itself as ministers of the kingdom of another world if it will now accept the working-class victory with good grace. It is not true, as Archbishop Enrique Perez Serantes of Santiago charges, that "an open battle against the religion of Christ has been started." Every Cuban knows that this is a lie (though some would not admit it). This kind of

statement strengthens Fidel with the people, who regard him as a better representative than the archbishop of "the religion of Christ."

The government is not promoting atheism. It is rather working toward a patriotic Church that will keep Catholicism compatible with support for the Revolution. A mass on Mother's Day in the Civic Plaza conducted by Father Guillermo Sardiñas, Catholic chaplain of the Rebel Army, was broadcast on television. The government has no desire to force Cubans to choose between their religion and the Revolution. But this is the painful choice the Church now seems to wish to inflict on conscientious Cubans, who cannot easily turn their backs either on Fidel Castro or on their religion. This crisis, added to the growing prestige of the Soviet Union, could lead to a spread of atheism. People are reexamining their beliefs, forced by circumstance. It is not uncommon for sober discussions of atheism to develop on buses. No one is heard to defend the priests. The dominant attitude seems to be that God does exist; but a growing minority doubts it, prodded not by government propaganda or the Communist Party, but rather by a comparison between the atheistic Soviet Union and the God-fearing American government.

Furthermore, the Revolution has made atheism permissible and even respectable. Though Fidel does not profess atheism, his analysis of problems bespeaks a materialist conception of history and a humanist view of politics. He accepts the Marxian hypothesis of the class struggle, and he makes policy as a response to human needs, not as a realization of a Divine Idea. He speaks of his duty to people, not to God. This is another reason why it has been possible for him to draw freely on the Soviet Union for help. Ché Guevara and Raúl Castro express the same freedom from religious scruples toward an association with atheists. A part of the strength and stability of the Cuban Revolution comes from the fact that its leaders are virtual atheists. Not pretending to have any God on their side, they make themselves more effective agents of democracy. They listen to people, and particularly poor people, with all diligence and humility. This is another aspect of the undeclared Marxist-Leninist content in the Cuban Revolution.

Again, some will say that the Revolution is doomed for this among other causes. Some readers, favorable to the Revolution, will regret that such conclusions should be publicly expressed about it, whether accurate or not. That only shows their own timidity, not any weakness in the Revolution. In these revolutionary times, Americans will more and more be forced to confront atheism in progressive leaders and resolve their own attitude toward it. This is all the more necessary because the American government, like Philip II of Spain, purports to be acting as the agent of a Divine Will. The perils for the American people in such a self-deceiving pretension are shadowed in the ruins of the Cuban invasion at Cienaga de Zapata, launched with the blessing and the prayers of the Church. There are traits worse than atheism in those who determine the fate of mankind.

### Conclusion

While Cuba rivets American attention as a battleground with the Soviet Union it also sheds new light on the character of the American government. It has thus become a factor in the education of the American people in the realities of their own state. The Cuban Revolution is obviously a milestone in the disintegration of international capitalism. It is also a milestone in the steady advance of socialism in the ideological struggle between two world systems. It could also prove to be a turning point in political developments inside the United States, though this consequence will hardly yet be observed by the bulk of Americans. The inability of the American government to adopt any rational policy toward Cuba as judged from the point of view of the American people, an inability that has already been demonstrated by both parties in successive administrations, will sooner or later, inevitably, serve to raise in the minds of Americans the question, just whom does this government serve? If it continues to demonstrate a fatal internal logic by carrying the American people ever farther into isolation from other peoples, even from old allies; closer to acts of aggression that will be condemned by the world as criminal; to war with the Soviet Union over an unjust cause; to moral and physical disaster on a national scale—Americans will ultimately

arrive at an internal crisis of their own, not now clearly foreseen, but predictable when the present situation is traced to its causes. The American people will not forever suffer a system that drags them remorselessly into shame and catastrophe. Fidel Castro, who has gone from triumph to triumph by obeying the necessities of his own people, may serve in the end to reveal to Americans the causes of their own decline.

These causes do not lie in the character of the American people, who are not inferior to the peoples of the Soviet Union. But they live and work in a state organized on a different principle and governed by a different class. In those differences will be found the causes of the growing humiliation of the American nation in its rivalry with the Soviet Union. Sputnik and space travel by Soviet citizens, while the American projects founder and fall ever farther behind, are only the most spectacular victories for the Soviet over the American system. Cuba is another such triumph for the Soviet Union. Fidel Castro discovered two facts that determined his strategy for achieving the changes called for by the hunger, the corruption, and the hopelessness of the Cuban people. First, he discovered that the American government and American corporations blocked indispensable revolutionary measures. American policy did not, could not, help him in his work, but on the contrary proved an obstacle at every turn. Second, the Soviet Union proved that it could help the Cubans achieve a new birth through a Revolution of indigenous origins, proposed and led by Cubans and shaped strictly by conditions of life in Cuba. On those two demonstrated facts hangs much of the history of Cuba since January, 1959, and perhaps much of the history still to come in other countries of Latin America.

The Soviet Union won Fidel Castro and the Cuban people in a contest that began with all the odds of geography and tradition against such an event. This change of attitude toward the Soviet Union on the part of a Latin American people is no less momentous than Soviet feats in space. It is of course related to the growing power, as well as to a better understanding, of the socialist countries, to the change in the balance of world forces.

The world is being made safe for Communism. Already

it is clear that international capitalism cannot act against a development like the Cuban Revolution with accustomed impunity. Events in Cuba are momentous because they are likely to happen again and again; because it will become steadily easier for the Soviet Union to win new friends as the Maginot Line of anti-Communism collapses, as more evidence of Soviet power accumulates, and as the anti-popular character of American policy becomes clearer with every new revolutionary crisis. Conditions are ripe in other countries for popular revolutions that will pull down old and discredited ruling classes from their thrones of privilege. The Soviet Union can give these movements moral, material, diplomatic, and military support. The American government can only try to mask a fundamental hostility to popular revolutions that menace the crumbling economic system it serves and administers.

Such observations are bound to stir resentment in the American government. The jilted suitor does not enjoy hearing about the new bliss of the rival who has taken his place. Nevertheless, it is important for the American people to understand what has happened in Cuba, because events there compel a reappraisal, a more sophisticated judgment, of their government if they are to save themselves from a bitter and tragic train of errors and perhaps crimes committed in their name. As these lines are written it seems possible that American marines, paratroopers, and aviators, conditioned by official falsehoods, will be dying in battles they will not be able to explain for a cause not their own. If the present trend even brings Soviet rockets down on American cities, more and more people will ask, how did this come about? Such a question will be very dangerous for the American government, because no satisfactory answer can be given.

## **CUBA: EXCEPTIONAL CASE?**

**BY MAJOR "CHE" GUEVARA**

Never in America has there been an event of such extraordinary characteristics, such deep roots, and such far-reaching consequences for the destiny of the progressive movements of the continent as our revolutionary war. By some it has even been called the cardinal event in the history of America and next in importance to the triad composed of the Russian Revolution, the social transformations that followed the triumph over Hitler's armies, and the victory of the Chinese Revolution.

This movement, while extremely varied in its forms and manifestations, has followed—and it could not have been otherwise—the general lines of all the great historical events of the century, which are characterized by the struggle against colonialism and the transition to socialism.

Certain groups, however, either in good faith or in self-interest, have purported to see in the Cuban Revolution a series of exceptional causes and characteristics; these they magnify in importance, even making them the determining factors in interpreting these profound social and historical events. There is talk of the "exceptionalism" of the Cuban Revolution as compared with the lines of other progressive parties in America; consequently it is affirmed that the form and paths of the Cuban Revolution are a unique product and that the historic transition of the peoples in the other countries of America will be different.

We recognize that there were exceptional factors giving peculiar characteristics to the Cuban Revolution. It is a clearly established fact that every revolution contains this type of special factor; but it is no less clearly established that revolutions also obey certain laws that societies cannot escape. Let us analyze, then, the factors in this supposed exceptionalism.

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*Under the title "Cuba: Exceptional Case Or Vanguard In The Struggle Against Colonialism?" this article first appeared in Verdo Olivo, publication of the Cuban Revolutionary Army, on April 9, 1961. The translation is by J. P. Morray.*

The first, the most novel and perhaps the most important is this earthshaking force named Fidel Castro Ruz, who in a few years' time has reached the dimensions of history. The future will assign an exact place to the merits of our Prime Minister; it seems to us that they are to be ranked with those of the greatest figures in the history of Latin America. What are the exceptional circumstances surrounding the personality of Fidel Castro? There are various factors in his life and character that make him stand out clearly from all his companions and followers. Fidel has such a tremendous personality that he would lead any movement in which he participated; this he has done throughout his career, from his student days to the premiership of our country and of the oppressed peoples of America. He has the qualities of a great leader. These qualities, joined with his personal traits of audacity, force, and courage and with his extraordinary eagerness always to listen for the will of the people, have carried him to the place of honor and sacrifice that he now occupies. He also has other important qualities: his ability, for example, to assimilate learning and experience in order to understand a given situation as a whole without losing sight of the details; his immense faith in the future; his breadth of vision in foreseeing events and acting ahead of them, always seeing farther and more clearly than his companions. With these great cardinal qualities, combined with his capacity to bind and unite and oppose the division that weakens; with his capacity to direct the action of the people as the supreme head; with his infinite love for the people, his faith in the future and his ability to foresee it, Fidel Castro did more than anyone else in Cuba to build from nothing the formidable apparatus of the Cuban Revolution of today.

Nevertheless, no one could affirm that political and social conditions in Cuba were totally different from those of the other countries of America and that the Revolution occurred precisely because of such differences. Neither could it be affirmed, on the other hand, that Fidel made the Revolution in spite of the differences. Fidel, a great and able leader, directed the Revolution in Cuba at the moment and in the way he did by interpreting the profound political disturbances that prepared the people for the great leap along revolutionary paths. Also,

certain conditions existed which, though not peculiar to Cuba, will be difficult to exploit again by other peoples; because imperialism, unlike certain progressive groups, learns from its mistakes.

The condition that we could call exceptional is that North American imperialism was disoriented and could not measure the true depth of the Cuban Revolution. There is something in this that explains many of the apparent contradictions in North American policy. The monopolies, as is usual in these cases, began to think about a successor to Batista precisely because they knew that the people, discontented, were also looking for one through a revolutionary approach. What stroke more intelligent and clever than to remove the unserviceable little dictator and put in his place the new "youngsters," who would in their day be able to serve the interests of imperialism very well. The imperialists played for a while with this card from their continental deck and lost miserably. They were suspicious of us before the victory but did not fear us; or rather, they played two cards, using their experience at this double game wherein habitually they could not lose. Emissaries from the Department of State, disguised as reporters, several times arrived to assay the uncouth Revolution but never succeeded in discovering any symptom of the impending danger. When imperialism wanted to react, when it realized that the group of inexperienced youngsters that marched in triumph through the streets of Havana had a clear understanding of their political duty and a firm determination to live up to that duty, it was already too late. Thus was born in January, 1959, the first social revolution in the whole Caribbean zone and the most thorough of the American revolutions.

We do not believe there was anything exceptional in the fact that the bourgeoisie, or at least a good part of it, showed itself favorable to the revolutionary war against the tyranny but at the same time supported and promoted movements tending toward a search for negotiated solutions that would permit a replacement of Batista by elements disposed to check the revolution.

In view of the conditions in which the revolutionary war was fought and the complexity of the political forces that



opposed the tyranny, it is not to be wondered at that some landlord elements adopted an attitude of neutrality or at least of non-belligerency toward the insurrectionary forces.

It is understandable that the national bourgeoisie, ruined by imperialism and by the tyranny, whose troops plundered small property and made a daily livelihood from bribery, saw with a certain amount of sympathy that these youngsters from the mountains punished the mercenary army that was serving as the armed instrument of imperialism.

Thus, non-revolutionary forces in fact helped the Revolution to win power.

Going to an extreme, we can add a new factor of exceptionalism, namely, that in most parts of Cuba the country people had been proletarianized by the operation of big capitalist, semi-mechanized forms of cultivation and had entered a stage of organization that gave it a stronger class consciousness. We can admit this. But we ought to mention, out of respect for the truth, that the first territory occupied by the Rebel Army, made up of survivors of the defeated column that had arrived aboard the *Granma*, was inhabited by a class of peasants different in its cultural and social roots from those that dwell in the regions of extensive, semi-mechanized Cuban agriculture. In fact, the Sierra Maestra, locale of the first revolutionary hive, is a section that serves as a refuge to all those country workers who struggle daily against the landlords. They go there as squatters on land belonging to the state or some rapacious landowner, searching for a piece of land that will yield them some small wealth. They must fight continuously against the exactions of the soldiers, always allied with the landowning power; their horizon does not go beyond a document of title to their land. The soldiers that made up our first guerrilla army of country people came from the part of this social class which shows its love for the possession of land most aggressively, which expresses most perfectly the spirit catalogued as petty bourgeois; the *campesino* fights because he wants land, for himself, for his children; he wants to manage it, sell it, and make himself rich through his work.

Despite his petty bourgeois spirit, the *campesino* quickly learns that he cannot satisfy his desire for land without breaking

the property system of latifundia. Radical agrarian reform, which alone can give land to the *campesinos*, collides directly with the interests of the imperialists, the big landowners, and the magnates of sugar and cattle raising. The bourgeoisie is afraid to collide with these interests. The proletariat has no such fear. In this way the very march of the Revolution unites workers and *campesinos*. The workers support the struggle against the latifundia. The poor *campesino*, the recipient of property in land, loyally supports the revolutionary power and defends it from its imperialist and counter-revolutionary enemies.

We believe that no other factors of exceptionalism exist. We have been generous in stating them in an extreme form. We will now look at the permanent roots of all social phenomena in America, the contradictions that ripen in the bosom of modern societies to provoke changes that can acquire the magnitude of a revolution like that in Cuba.

First in chronological order, though not in order of importance at this time, stands the system of latifundia; this was the basis of the economic power of the dominant class throughout the period that followed the liberating, anti-colonial revolutions of the past century. This landowning social class, which exists in all countries, generally lags behind the social events that move the world. To a certain extent, however, the most alert and clear sighted of this landowning class see the danger and begin to change the form of their invested capital, advancing at times into mechanized agricultural production, transferring a part of their wealth to industry, or making themselves the commercial agents of monopoly interests. The first liberating revolution did not destroy the latifundia as an economic basis, leaving a reactionary element that stands for the principle of servitude on the land. This is the phenomenon that appears without exception in all the countries of Latin America and serves as the substratum of all the injustices committed since the period when the king of Spain conceded great grants of land to the most noble *conquistadores*, leaving for the natives, Créoles and mestizos in the case of Cuba, only the *realeños*, that is, the patches of land left between three large circular tracts that touch each other.

The landowner, understanding in most countries that he

could not survive alone, rapidly entered into an alliance with the monopolies, which were, of course, the strongest and cruellest oppressors of the American peoples. North American capital arrived to impregnate the virgin lands, in order quietly to carry away later all the foreign exchange that had been "generously" donated earlier, plus further amounts that were several times greater than the sum originally invested in the "beneficiary" country.

America was one field of struggle among great imperialist consortia. The "wars" between Costa Rica and Nicaragua, the separation of Panama, the infamy committed against Ecuador in its dispute with Peru, the struggle between Paraguay and Bolivia are nothing other than manifestations of this gigantic battle among the great monopolist combinations of the world. By the end of World War II this struggle had been decided almost completely in favor of the North American monopolies. From that time on, the imperialists dedicated themselves to strengthening their hold on their colonies and to perfecting the framework against intrusion by old and new competitors from other imperialist countries. All this has produced a monstrously distorted economy that has been described by economists of the imperialist regimes with an innocuous phrase, demonstrating the profound charity that they feel for us, the inferior beings (our miserably exploited Indians, persecuted and reduced to ignominy, they call "little Indians"; all men of Negro or Mulatto race, neglected and discriminated against, they call "colored," making instruments of them as individuals and as a class for dividing the working masses in their struggle for a better economic destiny). They give us, the peoples of America, another decorous and inoffensive name: the "underdeveloped."

What is underdevelopment?

A dwarf with an enormous head and a swollen chest is "underdeveloped" in the sense that his weak legs and short arms do not correspond to the rest of his anatomy; he is the monstrous product of a malformation that distorted his development. This is what we, the kindly named "underdeveloped" countries, are in reality, countries that are colonial, semi-colonial, or dependent. Ours are countries with distorted economies, distorted by imperialist policy, which has abnormally developed

the industrial or agricultural branches that complement the imperialists' own complex economies. "Underdevelopment" or distorted development brings a dangerous specialization in raw materials that keeps all our peoples in peril of hunger. We, the underdeveloped, are also the countries of monoculture, of the single product, of the single market. A single product, the uncertain sale of which depends upon a single market that imposes and fixes conditions—that is the great formula of imperialist economic domination, which must be added to the old and eternally new Roman slogan, divide and rule.

The large landholding system, then, through its connections with imperialism completely determines so-called underdevelopment, which produces as a result unemployment and low wages. This phenomenon of low wages and unemployment is a vicious circle that yields ever lower wages and greater unemployment as the contradictions in the system sharpen; always at the mercy of cyclical economic fluctuations, they create what is the common denominator of the peoples of America, from the Rio Bravo to the South Pole. This common denominator, which we will print in capital letters and which serves as the starting point for all who think about these social phenomena, is **HUNGER OF THE PEOPLE**; weariness with being oppressed, harassed, exploited to the extreme; weariness with selling labor power miserably day after day (confronted by the danger of increasing the ranks of the unemployed) in order that the maximum of profits can be squeezed from every human body, to be squandered in the orgies of the owners of capital.

We see, then, that there are important and inescapable common denominators in Latin America and that we cannot say that we were exempt from any of these interconnected evils that culminate in the most terrible and permanent of all evils: hunger of the people. The landholding system, whether in a primitive form of exploitation, or as a form of capitalist monopoly of the land, adjusts itself to the new conditions and becomes an ally of imperialism, the form of exploitation by foreign finance monopoly capital, in order to create economic colonialism, euphemistically called "underdevelopment." This produces low wages, underemployment and unemployment: hunger of the people. All this existed in Cuba. There was hunger here, too;

here the percentage of unemployed was one of the highest in Latin America; here imperialism was more ferocious than in many countries of America; and here the latifundium existed with as much strength as in any sister country.

What did we do to free ourselves from this powerful system of imperialism with its company of puppet governments in every country and its mercenary armies, willing to defend the puppet and the whole complex social system of exploitation of man by man? We applied certain formulas that on other occasions we have called discoveries of our empirical medicine for the great evils of our beloved Latin America, empirical medicine that rapidly became a part of the explanation of scientific truth.

Objective conditions for the struggle are given in the hunger of the people, in the reaction to this hunger, in the terror let loose to check the popular reaction, and in the wave of hate that repression creates. Subjective conditions were missing in America, the most important being the consciousness of the possibility of victory through violent struggle against the imperialist powers and their internal allies. These conditions were created through armed struggle, which served to make clearer the necessity of change (and permitted it to be foreseen) and of the defeat and total liquidation of the army (an indispensable condition to every true revolution) by popular forces.

In addition to pointing out that these conditions are created by means of armed struggle, we must explain once more that the scene of that struggle should be the countryside. The *campesinos* with an army made up of their own kind fighting for their own great objectives, primarily for a just distribution of land, will come from the country to take the cities. On the ideological base of the working class, whose great thinkers discovered the social laws that rule us, the *campesino* class in America will provide the great liberating army of the future, as it has already done in Cuba. This army, created in the countryside, where subjective conditions ripen for the seizure of power, proceeds to conquer the cities from the outside, uniting with the working class and enriching the content of its own ideology by these contacts. It can and should demolish the oppressor army, at first in skirmishes, combats, surprises, and fin-

ally in great battles, when it has grown from a small guerrilla band into a large popular army of liberation. One stage in the consolidation of revolutionary power will be the liquidation of the old army, as we stated earlier.

If all these conditions that characterized Cuba were to exist in the other countries of Latin America, in other struggles to conquer power for the dispossessed classes, what would happen? Would it be practicable or not? If it were practicable would it be easier or more difficult than in Cuba? Let us explain the difficulties that in our view will make the new revolutionary struggles in America more difficult. There are general difficulties confronting all countries, and special difficulties for those in which the stage of development or national peculiarities differentiate them from the others. We have already mentioned at the beginning of this article that certain factors could be considered exceptional: the attitude of imperialism, disoriented at the time of the Cuban Revolution; and, up to a certain point, the attitude of the national bourgeoisie itself, also disoriented, even looking upon the action of the rebels with a certain sympathy because of the harm done to local bourgeois interests by the imperialists (this latter situation generally prevails in all our countries). Cuba has once again drawn a line in the sand and revived the alternatives of Pizarro: on one side are those who love the people, on the other those who hate the people. The line is producing with ever greater certainty a division into the two great social classes, the bourgeoisie and the working class. They are defining their respective positions with increasing clarity as the process of the Cuban Revolution advances.

This means that imperialism has learned, fundamentally, the lesson of Cuba and that it will not again be taken by surprise in any of our twenty republics, in any of the colonies that still exist, in any part of America. This means that great popular battles against powerful invasion armies await those who now try to violate the peace of the sepulchers, the *Pax Romana*. This is important, because if the Cuban War of Liberation with its two years of continual combat, anguish, and instability was difficult, the new battles that await the people in other parts of Latin America will be infinitely more difficult.

The United States hastens the delivery of arms to the puppet governments they see to be increasingly imperiled; it makes them sign pacts of dependence, in order to facilitate in a legal sense the shipment of instruments of repression and death and of troops to use them. Furthermore, military preparation of the repressive armies increases, with the intention of making them efficient weapons against the people.

And what about the bourgeoisie? This will be asked, because in many countries of America objective contradictions exist between a national bourgeoisie struggling to develop and imperialism, which floods the markets with articles in order to crush national industry in an unequal competition. There are, besides, other forms or manifestations of struggle for surplus value and riches.

Despite these contradictions, the national bourgeoisie is in general not capable of maintaining a consistent attitude of struggle against imperialism. It shows that it fears popular revolution even more than the oppression and despotic domination of imperialism, which crushes nationality, offends patriotic sentiments, and colonizes the economy.

The big bourgeoisie opposes the revolution outright and does not hesitate to ally itself with imperialism and the landowners in order to fight against the people and close the road to the revolution.

A desperate and hysterical imperialism, determined to undertake all kinds of maneuvers and to give arms and even troops to its puppets in order to annihilate any people that rebels; a ferocious and unscrupulous landowning class, experienced in the most brutal forms of oppression; and a big bourgeoisie disposed to close, by whatever method, the roads to popular revolution—these are the great allied forces that directly oppose the new popular revolutions of Latin America.

Such are the difficulties that must be added, since the consolidation of the irreversible Cuban Revolution, to all those others arising from the conditions of struggle in Latin America.

There are other, more specific problems. It is more difficult to prepare guerrilla bands in those countries that have undergone a concentration of population in great centers and have a more developed light and medium industry, even though

not anything like effective industrialization. The ideological influence of the cities inhibits the guerrilla struggle by raising hopes for peacefully organized mass struggle. This creates a certain "institutionalism," in which, during periods more or less "normal," conditions are not as hard for the people as they are otherwise. The idea even arises of possible quantitative increases in parliamentary representation for the revolutionary elements to such an extent that a qualitative change will be achieved.

In our opinion it is very improbable that this hope will be realized, given present conditions, in any country of America. Though a possibility that the change can begin through the electoral process is not to be excluded, prevailing conditions in all countries make the possibility very remote.

Revolutionaries cannot foresee in advance all the tactical variables that can arise in the course of the struggle for their liberating program. The real capacity of a revolutionary is measured by his ability to find adequate revolutionary tactics in every change of situation; by keeping all tactics in mind he will exploit them to the maximum. It would be an unpardonable error to underestimate the gain that a revolutionary program can make through a given electoral process. At the same time, it would be unpardonable to look only to elections and to neglect other forms of struggle, including armed struggle, to win power, which is the indispensable instrument for applying and developing the revolutionary program. If power is not won, all other conquests, however advanced they appear, are unstable, insufficient, and incapable of producing necessary solutions.

And when someone speaks of winning power via the electoral process our question is always the same: if a popular movement takes over the government by winning a wide popular vote and resolves as a consequence to begin the great social transformations that make up the triumphant program, would it not encounter conflict immediately with the reactionary classes of that country? Has not the army always been the repressive instrument of that class? If this is so, it is logical to suppose that this army will side with its class and take part in the conflict against the new government. By means of a *coup d'etat*, more or less bloodless, this government can be over-



thrown and the old game renewed again, and so on without end. It can also happen that the oppressor army will be defeated by an armed popular reaction in defense of the government. What appears improbable to us is that the armed forces would accept profound social reforms with good grace and meekly resign themselves to liquidation as a caste.

So far as the large urban concentrations are concerned, in our humble opinion even in these cases it may be advisable to engage in struggle outside the limits of the city in a way that can continue for a long time. The existence of a guerrilla center in some mountain of a country with populous cities maintains a perpetual focus of rebellion. It is very unlikely that the repressive powers will be able, either rapidly or over a long period of time, to liquidate guerrilla bands established with social bases in territory favorable to guerrilla warfare, if the strategy and tactics of this type of warfare are consistently employed.

What would happen in the cities is quite different. Armed struggle against the repressive army can develop to an unsuspected degree, but this will become a frontal struggle only when there is a powerful army ready to fight against another army. A frontal fight against a powerful and well armed army cannot be undertaken by only a small group.

Many arms will be needed for the frontal struggle, and the question arises, where are these arms? They do not appear spontaneously: they must be seized from the enemy. But in order to seize them from the enemy it is necessary to fight; and it is not possible to fight openly. Therefore, the struggle in the big cities must begin as a clandestine operation in order to capture military groups or weapons, one by one in successive assaults.

In case this happens, a great advance can be made, and we would not dare say that victory will be denied a popular rebellion with a guerrilla base inside the city. No one can object on theoretical grounds to this approach; at least we have no intention of doing so. But we do wish to point out how easy it would be, as the result of a betrayal or simply by means of repeated raids, to eliminate the leaders of the revolution. On the other hand, if while using all conceivable maneuvers in the

city, such as organized sabotage and above all, that particularly effective form of action which is suburban guerrilla warfare; if besides, a base is maintained in the countryside, the revolutionary political power, because 'it is relatively safe from the contingencies of the war, will remain intact even if the oppressor power defeats and annihilates all the popular forces in the city. It should be *relatively* safe, but not outside the war, not giving directions from some other country or from distant places; it should be within its own country, fighting. These are the considerations that make us believe that even in countries where the predominance of the cities is great, the central political focus of the struggle can develop in the countryside.

Returning to the question of counting on help from the military class in dealing the blow, there are two problems to be analyzed; first, if the military personnel really joins with the popular forces to strike the blow, supposing them to be an organized nucleus with an autonomous power of decision, in such a case there would be a *coup* by one part of the army against another part, probably leaving the structure of the military caste intact. The other case, in which armies unite rapidly and spontaneously with popular forces, can only occur, in our opinion, after the armies have been beaten violently by a powerful and persistent enemy, that is, in conditions of catastrophe for the constituted power. When the army has been defeated and its morale destroyed, this phenomenon can occur; but preliminary struggle is necessary and always we return to the question of how to carry on that struggle. The reply directs us toward the development of guerrilla struggle in the countryside in favorable ground, supported by struggle in the cities, counting always on the widest possible participation of the worker masses and guided, naturally, by the ideology of that class.

We have said enough about the difficulties that revolutionary movements in Latin America will encounter. The question can now be asked whether or not there are favorable conditions for the preliminary stage, that of Fidel Castro in the Sierra Maestra. We believe that here too there are general conditions that facilitate the burgeoning of these centers of rebellion and specific conditions in certain countries that are even more favorable. We should point out two subjective factors that are

among the most important consequences of the Cuban Revolution: the first is the possibility of victory, since it is now known that the capacity exists to crown with success an enterprise like that undertaken by the group of deluded expeditionaries on the *Granma* who fought for two years in the Sierra Maestra. This indicates immediately the feasibility of a revolutionary movement that operates from the countryside, that draws to it the *campesino* masses, that will grow from weakness to strength, that will destroy the army in a frontal assault, that will capture cities from the countryside, that will strengthen through its struggle the subjective conditions necessary for seizing power.

The importance of this fact can be seen in the number of exceptionalists who have now appeared. Exceptionalists are those peculiar beings who find that the Cuban Revolution is a unique, an inimitable event in the world, led by a man who, whether or not he has flaws (which will depend on whether the exceptionalist is from the Right or the Left), has carried the revolution along paths that opened only once and exclusively for the Cuban Revolution. Nothing could be more false, we say. The possibility of triumph by the popular masses in Latin America clearly appears in the form of guerrilla warfare, carried out by an army of *campesinos* that defeats the oppressor army in a frontal assault, takes cities by attacks from the countryside, and dissolves the oppressor army as the first stage in destroying completely the superstructure of the previous colonial world.

We can mention as a second subjective factor that the masses not only know the possibility of triumph; they now know their destiny. They know with increasing certainty that, whatever the tribulations of history during short periods, the future belongs to the people, because the future will bring social justice. This will help to raise revolutionary ferment to an even higher pitch than already prevails in Latin America.

We may mention some less general factors, which vary in intensity from country to country. One of these, very important, is exploitation of the *campesinos*, which was generally less in Cuba than in the other countries of Latin America. Those who claim to see in the insurrectional period of our struggle the effects of proletarianization of the countryside should remember that, however greatly this proletarianization

of the countryside served later to accelerate the stage of forming cooperatives following the take-over of power and the Agrarian Reform, in the first fighting stage the *campesino*, center and marrow of the Rebel Army, was the same person that today is back in the Sierra Maestra, the proud owner of his plot and intensely individualist. There are of course peculiarities in America; an Argentine *campesino* does not have the same outlook as a communal *campesino* in Peru, Bolivia, or Ecuador; but the hunger for land is permanently present in the *campesinos*, and it is generally they who give the keynote to America. Since in other countries they are even more exploited than was the case in Cuba, the possibilities are great that this class will rise up in arms.

There is also another fact. The army of Batista, with all its enormous defects, was an army structured in such a way that all, from the lowest soldier to the highest general, were accomplices in the exploitation of the people. They were completely mercenaries, and this gave a certain cohesiveness to the repressive apparatus. The armies of America in the main include a professional officers' corps and non-professional recruits called up periodically. Each year the young recruits leave their homes, where they have heard accounts of the daily sufferings of their parents, seen them with their own eyes, and felt the misery and social injustice. If one day they are sent as cannon fodder to fight against the defenders of a doctrine that they feel in their own flesh to be just, their capacity to act aggressively will be seriously affected. With adequate systems of propaganda making the recruits see the justice of the struggle and the reasons for the struggle, magnificent results will be achieved.

We can say after this superficial study of revolutionary events that the Cuban Revolution included exceptional factors that give it a peculiarity and factors that are common to all the peoples of America, factors that express the internal necessity of this Revolution. And we see that there are also new conditions that will make the beginning of revolutionary movements easier: a consciousness in the masses of their destiny; a consciousness of the necessity and of the certain fulfillment of this possibility. At the same time there are conditions that will make

it more difficult for the masses rapidly to achieve the objective of taking governmental power. The national bourgeoisies are so closely allied with imperialism that they will fight directly against the popular force.

Dark days await Latin America; and the latest declarations of the United States leaders seem to indicate that dark days await the world. Lumumba, savagely assassinated in the grandeur of martyrdom, teaches the lesson that tragic errors ought not to be committed. Once the anti-imperialist struggle has begun, it is essential that it be fought consistently; hard blows should be dealt, constantly, where they will hurt; there should be no backsliding but a steady advance, always responding to each aggression with stronger pressure from the popular masses. This is the way to victory.

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A slave who has become conscious of his slavery, and who has risen to the height of fighting for his emancipation, has half ceased to be a slave.

—*Lenin*

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Revolution is not a dinner party, nor an essay, nor a painting, nor a piece of embroidery; it cannot be advanced softly, gradually, carefully, considerably, respectfully, politely, plainly, and modestly.

—*Mao Tse-tung*

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There were two "Reigns of Terror," if we would but remember it and consider it; the one wrought murder in hot passion, the other in heartless cold blood; the one lasted mere months, the other had lasted a thousand years; the one inflicted death upon the thousand persons, the other upon a hundred millions; but our shudders are all for the "horrors" of the minor Terror, the momentary Terror, so to speak; whereas, what is the horror of swift death by the ax compared with lifelong death from hunger, cold, insult, cruelty, and heartbreak? What is swift death by lightning compared with death by slow fire at the stake? A city cemetery could contain the coffins filled by that brief Terror which we have all been so diligently taught to shiver at and mourn over; but all France could hardly contain the coffins filled by that older and real Terror—that unspeakably bitter and awful Terror which none of us has been taught to see in its vastness or pity as it deserves.

—*Mark Twain, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*

## CUBAN NOTEBOOK

BY MARC SCHLEIFER

*New York.* Slowly the word is getting around. A Revolutionary Cuba exists; it survives and grows without reference to the Fantasy Cuba of terror and imminent collapse, created these last two years by those minds directing our public policy and public opinion. The seeds of misconception are, of course, basic problems of power and interest slowly being brought to the American consciousness by honorable reporting in some of the liberal periodicals, by the obscure radical press, and a few of the literary quarterlies. Tomorrow, conceivably, the news services and the daily press could stop the lying, distortion, and incredible omissions; but even allowing the sudden public existence of "pure" fact, America will continue to fear and misunderstand the Cuban Revolution.

A few days after I returned to the states a reporter I know who works for the *New York Post* suggested that I attempt an article for his paper on the situation in Cuba at the time of the break in relations. I jumped at the opportunity, accepted the limitations (no editorializing, no impressionism, to-the-point journalism, etc.) and started to work. After twelve concentrated hours I abandoned the job. It was impossible. Every reportorial "fact" demanded a qualification if I were not to be party to further misunderstanding. What I'd stumbled on was the problem of dealing with the faulty powers of American perception. Words are more than sounds and symbols of agreed-upon meaning; they also exist in time, invoke generalized images and sensed values concurrent to a particular meaning rooted in the experience of the reader. You will read in the following pages that "Havana is an armed camp," but what I saw in Cuba in no way resembles what *you* envision reading my words. We are

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Marc Schleifer is a young writer and editor of the literary quarterly *Kulchur*, which has published the work of Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Paul Bowles, William Burroughs, and other writers of the "New American" group. His *Notebook* was written in January, 1961.

separated by almost two centuries from our own Revolution and can only project our own hopeless contemporary experiences upon those of other people. When I write that the streets of Havana are filled with armed militia you impose a picture of scowling marines, or at best the disciplined indifference of National Guard units. But the image recalled *should* be filled with patient Minute Men and casual Green Mountain Boys, not the bored and hostile reservists of 1961. Can you imagine a city "armed to its teeth" where I walked the streets at four in the morning, feeling far safer than I ever have walking Sullivan-Law New York streets in the early hours?

Can a society that thrives on tranquilizers and jails its marijuana smokers *understand* what it means when a people dance and sing in the streets? Can the recipients of mass advertising, of goods with built-in obsolescence, of a subsidized cash-crop agriculture, comprehend the revolutionary promise of productive living? The honest dispatch reads simply "Fidel spoke for four hours to an enthusiastic audience estimated at half a million," and New York armchair intellectuals fighting off the redskins on the New Frontier translate this as "a demagogue's stimulant for the wavering mass supporters of his tottering regime." And these are the responsible people who for eight years listened to and read the press conference vagaries of our barely literate last President without demanding immediate impeachment. Several of Fidel's speeches are available in translation, but who in America *has* read them? As a rule his speeches are long because they consist of a detailed analysis of a particular policy problem, its history, the alternatives available, and the proposed solution. If there is a danger, it is pedantry, not demagoguery.

And the crowds, the rallies of thousands cheering "Fidel, Fidel"? What do we have in our own experience to bring to bear, to cope with this phenomenon? There is the recent memory of mass enthusiasm for a general's baby-face smile and Kennedy's good looks, the "magic" of tired tragic-sense-sounding Stevenson and the hypnosis of McCarthy's irrationalism. All three styles have drawn devoted followers, each speech a ceremonial occasion, but basically none of these men have ever constructively *done* anything. The point, the never-comprehended point about

the hundreds of thousands of screaming Cubans is alien to a culture defining reality as "image." It is the real work of a charismatic man. The point is that rents *have* been cut in half, racial discrimination *has* been abolished, the corrupt sadistic police force *has* been dissolved, barracks *have* been turned into schoolrooms, agriculture *has* been diversified, the land *has* been redistributed, the old army destroyed and arms given to the people. Probably there are as many of us who can understand this as there are Americans who still can relate to the portion of our past when Washington ran twice unopposed for the presidency in one-party property-confiscating Revolutionary America.

*Mobilization.* The headlined fear of imminent invasion first appeared in the Havana press on the afternoon of December 31st. No one seemed to know any of the details.

In the evening I attended Fidel's New Year's party in honor of the 10,000 volunteer school teachers who were to leave for the countryside and begin a six-month mass education drive to wipe out all illiteracy in Cuba. The celebration was held at Havana's new educational center, Liberty City—formerly Camp Columbia, headquarters for Batista's army.

We hurried along the old fortress road leading to the parade ground where hundreds of long picnic tables were set up for the celebration, past rows of military barracks converted into schoolrooms and study halls. Swept along by the endless stream of Cubans, laughing, prancing, singing as they poured through the gates. Two years ago, this very night, Fulgencio Batista entered Camp Columbia, addressed his defeated generals and fled by plane from Cuba.

In certain respects it could have been a massive New Year's Eve party back in the states—food and drink, hours of wild entertainment, group singing and dancing between the tables. But Cubans take their pleasures differently. The evening moves towards midnight in an almost gentle manner—the crowd delivers itself into the experience of festivity—it does not have to calculate and count on Time. And when the hour comes there is none of that desperate gaiety and artificial intimacy that makes the American celebration such a forced and hope-



lessly depressing affair. Dozens of doves are suddenly released. They streak across the field while we are treated to a fantastic fireworks display. The effect is overwhelming—we cheer and return the salute by skimming thousands of white paper plates up into the air.

Sometime around one in the morning Fidel begins to speak. Carefully he reveals a series of recent seemingly isolated events that, put together, indicate the strong possibility of an American attack on Cuba in the last days of the Eisenhower administration. The events, presented to the UN the following day by Cuba's Foreign Minister, are dismissed as "press clippings" and "propaganda" by our man at the UN. Subsequently, almost all of the charges are confirmed as *isolated* acts in the following weeks by the *New York Times*, the news magazines, and the *New York Daily News*.

Finally, Fidel announces full scale mobilization of the country. "If they intend to come," he says, "let them know that Cuba will not be an easy weekend!" The crowd jumps to its feet, cheering and shouting, "VENCEREMOS, VENCEREMOS—WE WILL WIN!"

By the following afternoon (New Year's Day) Cuba is mobilized. Anti-aircraft emplacements and shore batteries are positioned along Havana's Malecon. The town has steadily been filling up with militiamen in from the country for the Anniversary Parade scheduled for January 2nd. Now, in addition, the streets are filled with Havana militia units called up and deployed around the city. A few nights before I had sat in the lobby of my hotel talking about Ginsberg and Kerouac, Henry Miller, Celine, Artaud and Genet, with José Baragaño, an important Cuban surrealist poet. By this evening Baragaño is off somewhere with his militia unit and the desk clerk and the hotel manager are now wearing pistol belts. Havana is an armed camp.

Those in the city who have not been called up go about their business and pleasure. The wealthy owner of a fashionable restaurant a few blocks from my hotel (according to rumor, implicated in a counter-revolutionary plot) flees to Florida and the waiters and kitchen workers elect a manager from among their ranks and invite some painters in from the neighborhood

to do window decorations. The restaurant stays open, another enterprise "under Revolutionary management." Late in the evening I stop off at the Hotel Riviera to visit Dick Gibson of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. He's with Bob Taber, Carleton Beals, and Berta Green drafting up a statement protesting the US embargo, and threat of military intervention, and urging the immediate negotiation of all issues with Cuba. The resolution reads well; in half an hour it will be presented at a midnight emergency meeting of the 340 Americans on the Fair Play tour staying at the Riviera.

Wandering around outside the hotel trying to buy a pack of cigarettes before the meeting begins (the cigarette girl has vanished from the lobby and casino) I end up outside of the entrance to the Riviera outdoor pool and dance pavilion in back of the hotel building. Tonight it's been taken over for a public dance. I pay the peso admission charge and enter the pavilion. Two thousand or more Habaneros are dancing around the pool. A wild Cha Cha band blasts away at the far end; near the entrance a dozen men hustle bottled beer to the circling crowds. The pavilion blazes with the colors of the Negro-Mulatto-Spanish working class and their flashy party clothes. Spotlight beams bounce off the surrounding buildings and flood the pool with light (the deserted Hotel Riviera pool, according to *Life*). Staggered by the scene, I grab a bottle of beer and forget about the meeting. The band suddenly swings into a new Cha Cha tune and every dancer in the place sings out the words, "Cu-ba Si Yan-kee No, Cu-ba Si Yan-kee No."

*The Opposition* (1). After two days in Cuba I met my first counter-revolutionary. Late in the evening, stopped for coffee in a wealthy section of Havana. An aging businessman quoting Dale Carnegie in Spanish as his guide to politics, latches on to me. The whole trouble is that Fidel is too young, the entire government is too young—mature men wise in the ways of the world would never have dared to antagonize America, which is such a powerful country. "It isn't right that we have seized *your* companies."

"They're not my companies," I answer.

*The Vanishing Americans.* News of the United States break-off of diplomatic relations with Cuba reached me during intermission at the Havana National Theatre.

It is Tuesday, January 3rd, and the Yugoslav Folk Dance troupe is performing this evening. I'm with "Roberto J.," a young American working for the Cuban Film Institute since the Revolution. Roberto's worried—does this mean the loss of his passport if he stays? He's about to start production of an important film, but he hasn't *actually* started . . . he can chance an American blacklist, but to *lose* his citizenship? . . . he is an American, but he can't run out on the Revolution . . . So it goes, for blocks, as we walk from the theatre towards Calle 23, the main drag in Havana's Vedado section. A lovely evening about to be ruined by Roberto's anguish. Finally, to settle it we cut over to the American Embassy. Almost midnight but the lights are on, and documents are burning. Roberto waits across the street while I talk with an Embassy official at the door. Elderly, self-consciously distinguished, he reminds me of an "understanding" Dean I dreaded years ago when called to account for my undergraduate cutting.

The official is assuring. While reminding me that our government has for some time urged Americans to avoid "the risks" of a trip to Cuba, the break, legally, only means that there will not be an Embassy around to protect American nationals. But certainly there is no danger of loss of citizenship or passport if one chooses to stay. "After all, *Americans* are free to travel wherever they want to go."

Not too far from the Embassy is the jazz club called the One Eyed Cat. Our table is near the bar where two young Americans are standing and talking. We listen in for a few minutes and dig that they are Embassy employees taking in a last night on the town. Roberto goes into the classic "hey you guys American?" discovery-routine of ancient expatriate con-men, inviting them to our table where we make a fantastic scene out of bumming American cigarettes (a rare blackmarket item in Cuba since the embargo). One of the boys asks suspiciously if we're part of the Fair Play tour. We set them straight about our Americanism. "What Committee? No, we

just came over from Miami couple days ago for kicks. What's happened to Havana, this used to be a great liberty town?" The boys pull their chairs in close and quickly fill us in on the local situation. Havana *used* to be a great liberty town, but that was before these Commies took over. Apparently we've taken a terrible chance coming and we'll be lucky to get out in one piece. Didn't we read the papers? Didn't we know we were in the middle of a police state, that Americans still around are regularly insulted, threatened, thrown in concentration camps, sometimes beaten up on the streets? That all anyone had to do was make a remark against the regime and they'd be arrested? Argentina, Brazil, and several other Latin American countries, we learn, are expected to follow America's lead and break off relations with Cuba in the next 24 hours. Getting bored, we decide to bring the conversation to an end.

"Looks like you guys have been, in effect, kicked out of this country," I start. "Where do you expect to go from here?"

"I'm trying to get an assignment to Laos," one of them replies.

"Yeah, but what happens when the United States gets kicked out of Laos in a couple of months?"

"Well, I might put in for Venezuela."

Yeah, but what happens when the United States gets kicked out of Venezuela in about a year or so?"

"You are with those Fair Play people!" accuses the tormented one. "I knew it, I knew it all along!" shouts his friend, and they rise indignantly from our table, gather their honor about them and stalk out of the club.

*The Opposition* (2). December 26th. This evening someone tossed a noise bomb at the hotel while we were at dinner. The bomb presumably is in honor of the Russian ballet troupe which moved in this afternoon. Yesterday, one was set off in a men's room at the Hotel Riviera for the benefit of the Fair Play people. This has been my only contact with the famous popular insurrection against Fidel, expected (for the last year and a half) to explode within a month.

*The Anniversary Parade.*

The secret weapon of this Revolution:

a young girl's hips  
that still can swing  
keeping step, armed,  
marching down the Paseo.

*The Opposition* (3). December 28. An aluminum shrapnel bomb exploded in the ladies' room of a crowded Havana cafeteria this noon. Thirteen people were injured. The cafeteria workers apologized to the roaring crowd of customers and pedestrians that formed outside on the street. "*Paredon Para Los Terroristas!*"

*The Police State.* Random titles in Cuban bookstores: *Crusade in Europe* ("History of the War" in Spanish); *More Money, More Capital, More Work* by Dr. Hjalmar Schacht; *What is Property?* by Proudhon; John Reed's *10 Days That Shook The World*; *The USSR* by Jules Moch; *The Communist Manifesto*; *Syndicalism* by Sorel and others; Le Bon's *Psychology of Revolution*; Whitehead's *The FBI Story*; *Dr. Zhivago*; *Essays* by Albert Camus; the works of Lenin; *The Rape of Hungary*; Malinowski's *Liberty and Civilization*; *What We Must Know About Communism* by the Overstreets; *Mills' The Power Elite*; *My Life* by Isadora Duncan.

*The Opposition* (4). The girls at the Blue Moon whore house are all counter-revolutionaries. "Fidel's loco" they say, "trying to fight the United States. Who does he think he is?" "Americans are very nice," they say, "spend a lot of money, give big tips, they have good hearts."

And now there are no more grateful college boys on Christmas vacation, sailors and marines on shore leave, or adventurous salesmen. The whores, pimps, and their affiliates in The Industry—exhibition and blue movie promoters, post card and flip-book distributors, homosexual hustlers, drug connections, and the ubiquitous English-speaking taxicab drivers—oppose the Revolution. A large number of Cubans can no longer service the needs of Puritan America.

Of all the classes and groups in opposition, only the members of The Industry have an honorable grievance. They exploited themselves and the American tourist clientele but rarely their fellow Cubans. Yankee dollars and thus only indirectly the misery of the Cuban masses, supported their existence. There is little deception in their opposition; the Revolution has alienated the sources of their livelihood, therefore they oppose the Revolution. Whores and taxicab drivers are too honorable to improvise a "police state" and the ogre of Communism. Only respectable parasites dare invoke such Latin American deceptions as "parliamentary democracy," free enterprise, and the Church.

Maria is a semi-retired \$100-a-night call girl who lives at my hotel. She is a beautiful young woman, with fine native intelligence, spontaneous humor, and a working knowledge of where she is that is almost frightening. Maria is ambivalent toward the Revolution; happy for the peasants and the city poor (*her* people) but desperate about losing the comforts and graceful life style she has earned. There is a gentleness about her beyond the trappings—"I prefer the Riviera, it's very chic"—of a whore's ambition. It is ridiculous to moralize about the frivolity and laziness of whores, they are no more capable (for identical reasons) of creative lives than most wives of the rich. In fact that is the only other role Maria could be capable of—a rich man's wife—and of course that's impossible—and if it *were* possible, the pretense and monotony would make it unbearable.

Maria is the beautiful doomed Romantic. She spends her afternoons running from one embassy to the next trying to get a visa. Her days are filled by mysterious appointments with "contacts" who may possibly help her, but never do. If I had the power to suspend history I would send her off in a white Jaguar convertible into some slice of time kind to her illusions. For finally, they of The Industry, the innocents of counter-revolution are hopelessly trapped. The common whores and pimps, even apparently the beautiful call girls, do not morally qualify for a United States visa. *Their* suffering is a tragedy—for all of the well-publicized others, it is a matter of simple justice.

*Patriotism.* I have been away before—Mexico, France, Spain, Tangier—but now, only 90 miles from my country (and away so short a time) I have such a strange homesickness for my land. Never have I felt so far away, so much apart, so thoroughly exiled. America is only 90 miles from Cuba, but we exist a thousand light-years away from truth and honor.

It is difficult to write this—the hatred chokes my words, and whenever the anger passes I am filled with such pity for us all—for our pathetic imperial arrogance, our hopeless destiny as victims—that my eyes begin to cloud.

I am writing this out of obligation—first to myself—to purge the anger, and probably as an act of penitence for every aspect of my past, for my part (the taxes I have paid, the lies I have echoed) in our miserable destiny. But also out of obligation to all the people who do not judge me for what we have done and what we want to do. Until this week I did not know I cared so much for my country (the callous sophistication we cultivate is necessary armoring against the pain that tears at me tonight—but now, in my isolation, in the shame I feel as an American, I suddenly understand the beautiful possibilities of patriotism).

I have been the victim of countless conversations and encounters:

Pablo Armando Fernandez, a young Cuban poet and an editor of the literary supplement *Lunes de Revolución*, quietly recalled the years of exile in New York during the dictatorship, the pain of separation from the sources of his art—his language, his landscape, his people.

Watching Jorge Egana, latifundia “traitor-to-his-class” who threw in with the Revolution, turning his property and equipment over to INRA where now as a functionary he works for and with the men who once called him *patron*.

The brothers Wande and Wilbur Castro from La Sierra de Marianao (a working class suburb of Havana), curious about the 6' 5" foreigner (“Russe? German? Yankee?”) wearing an old army field jacket and wandering around down town Havana. We picked each other up on my third day in Cuba, and they took me home with them for a 12-hour block party. Everybody wanted to meet the Yankee, so we drifted from

house to house, faces constantly changing as the neighbors took turns crowding into the small houses, everybody sending out for beer and the wives serving up huge batches of black beans and rice every couple hours. And always the same questions—"What do you think of *our* Revolution?" "How can your newspapers lie so much?" "Why don't more Americans come to Cuba and see the Revolution for themselves?" "Have you seen the new schools, cooperatives, public beaches, popular resorts, city housing, industries, parks and playgrounds, etc., etc.?" And always the same determination—"This Revolution has given us dignity and hope. If necessary, we are ready to die, all of us, defending it."

Drinking with Hector Zumbaldo, a young writer who went to college in Tennessee and drawls his English like a border-state Southerner—"A great thing is happening in Cuba. . . . Yes I'm in the Militia. I owe it to myself, for during the dictatorship I did nothing or almost nothing. I was afraid—a coward—but I've seen what brave men can do and I will be ready if necessary."

The *guajiro's* wife at El Rosario Cooperative proudly invited me into her home for a cup of coffee. The ranch-style house consists of 3 bedrooms, a living-dining area, kitchen, and bathroom. She has planted 15 fruit trees in her back garden. This house and all the others were built by her husband and her neighbors. They have also built a free medical clinic, a 7-room school house, playground, kindergarten, baseball field, general store, cultural center, butcher shop, and restaurant. They are now building a beach and boating club at the nearby ocean bay. Two years ago her family shared a thatched roof, dirt-floor *bohio* with two other families. Her children had never seen either a doctor or a teacher and her husband could only find work for about four months out of the year. We drank our coffee in the living room where she has hung framed pictures of Jesus Christ, the Virgin, Camilo Cienfuegos, and Fidel Castro.

Printed on bags of chicken feed—a quote from José Martí—"There is in the world no other honest way but the one you open with your own hands."



So this is the just-discovered source of my anger at our filthy officialdom, and our unbelievably dishonest press. They have befouled *our* heritage (Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys transformed into spies for CIA, urging the victimized pimps of Havana to start a counter-revolution) and debased our language into the paranoiac debate that reflects the national senility. Just as their masters, the enlightened corporations, have befouled our landscape (which is all we have left) with the same ease displayed in looting half a hemisphere.

I cannot even begin to refute the lies. My pen is miles behind my mind, and my mind a century behind my senses. For the present it is enough to say that the facts are all available (*vide* C. Wright Mills, Carleton Beals, Huberman and Sweezy, Dellinger, Roi Jones). It is the spirit moving these people, the kinetics of this fantastic revolution, that remain indescribable. ("Whole population seems 'turned on,'" writes Ferlinghetti.)

I do not know how long I can bear listening to Cubans telling me what this Revolution means to them, of the hope they now have, the wonders they have accomplished, and the life they endured "before." But if I must live with my own shame as a patriot, at least I can join with them, as a human, in their pride.

Understand, then, why it is so hard and so wonderful to say "Cuba si, Yankee no!"

## CUBA INVADED

BY PAUL A. BARAN

During the last few days, the hearts and minds of all those to whom the cause of progress and freedom is not a matter of lip service but a deep commitment have been going out in anguish, concern, and sympathy to the heroic workers and campesinos of Cuba. During the last few days, the dagger which has been held in the hands of counter-revolutionary gangs assembled and trained in Louisiana and Florida, in Guatemala and Nicaragua—that dagger was thrust into the flesh of the Cuban people. This operation was preceded by a number of other operations: bombers flew over Cuba dropping bombs on civilians, killing men, women, and children; destroying factories and dwellings; blowing up bridges and setting afire vital supplies. Acts of arson were perpetrated in which hundreds of thousands of tons of sugar were burned, in which stocks of other commodities were wrecked, in which fruits of Cuban labor were ruined. This sequence of operations was sponsored, promoted, and rendered possible by the government of the United States. The dagger was supplied by the American government, the bombers were supplied by the American government, and so were the bombs. This has been recognized everywhere, in this country and in the rest of the world, and to quote one source from many, I may refer to *Business Week* (April 15th, 1961) where it is explicitly stated: "President Kennedy has decided to give active U.S. support to Cuban insurgents in their mounting effort to topple the Communist-dominated regime of Fidel Castro. The President made a firm decision to do this about a month ago. His decision is a marked departure from the previous policy of relying on economic sanctions and diplomatic encirclement to bring about the collapse of Castro."

Whatever one may think about this policy adopted by President Kennedy in terms of political wisdom, there cannot be the

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*A talk given over Radio Station KPFA in Berkeley, California, on April 21, 1961. Professor Baran teaches at Stanford and is a frequent contributor to MR.*

slightest doubt that the sequence of operations undertaken from American soil with the help of the United States government constitutes a criminal offense under international law—however interpreted or construed. The government of the United States, which makes so much of its adherence to international law and which never misses an occasion to admonish other governments to respect the canons of that law, has broken it in the most flagrant fashion. Article 15 of the Charter of the Organization of American States to which the United States government has subscribed, with the advice and consent of the Senate, reads as follows: "No state or group of states has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other state. The foregoing principle prohibits not only armed force but also any other form of interference or attempted threat against the personality of the state or against its political, economic and cultural elements." The wording of the Neutrality Act which is on the statute books of the United States is different. What it stipulates, however, is exactly the same.

The question naturally arises, why were these crimes committed? The answer is given in a White Paper of the United States Department of State—released on April 4th and published in full in *The New York Times*. This paper, written in close collaboration with President Kennedy by Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., of Harvard University, gives the reason for our policy towards Revolutionary Cuba. And this reason boils down to a very simple proposition: the United States is committed to resist by all means at its disposal any revolution in Latin America, and presumably elsewhere, which transcends the limits of a bourgeois revolution. Any revolution which goes beyond certain political reforms, which goes beyond certain institutional changes which might strengthen parliamentary government or something resembling parliamentary government, any revolution which goes further—toward socialism—is a revolution which the U.S. sets itself up to fight to the bitter end.

Mr. Schlesinger commends certain accomplishments of the Cuban Revolution such as schools built, medical clinics established, new housing, the opening up of beaches and resorts to the people, the elimination of graft and corruption in the gov-

ernment; but he very carefully omits all reference to such reforms as the nationalization of factories, the formation of collective farms, the organization of a planned economy, the great effort to free the country from its pernicious dependence on one crop, sugar—all measures which are indispensable to genuine progress and genuine development of Cuba's economy and society. He states that Castro has interfered with the middle classes in Cuba, and that after having suppressed the middle classes, he has struck down elements in organized labor. How could he have nationalized the means of production and started to organize a socialist planned economy without harming the interests of the bourgeoisie? And those who know what elements in organized labor were struck down in Cuba, know also that these were elements of gangsterism, elements of so-called "business unionism" that were infesting the body of Cuba's organized labor. These were elements which any healthy labor movement would wish to be rid of at the earliest possible opportunity.

In the entire White Paper, which is full of solicitude for the Cuban people's freedom and advancement, there is nowhere a reference to the workers and campesinos of Cuba. There is nowhere a reference to the immense progress that has been achieved in only two years in the living and working conditions, in the elimination of unemployment, in the struggle against illiteracy, in all aspects of life—not of the Cuban middle class, but of the vast majority of the Cuban people. President Kennedy in his reply to Mr. Khrushchev considers the fact that 100,000 Cubans have left Cuba since the Revolution to be one of the most telling indictments of the Cuban Revolution. Has there ever been a revolution in which certain elements were not dispossessed, in which certain groups did not choose to emigrate, in which certain strata of the population did not turn into counter-revolutionaries? What is the meaning of the word "revolution" if no one is dethroned, if no one is thrown out of power and wealth and status? If none of these things occur, why speak of revolution? The United States Department of State has proclaimed itself to be the supreme judge of what kind of revolution is conducive to a country's welfare and what kind is not. The Department of State is to decide from now on which revolution is good and which is bad. And any revolutions that are bad—

bad because harmful to American national interests as they are interpreted by the Department of State—the government of the United States is determined to suppress.

It would be worthwhile for those who are not accustomed to thinking in historical terms to take a glance at some history books and to realize what the reaction was to the American Revolution at the time it took place. Let me present to you a few references on that subject: "The Revolution had been stirred up by a few crafty men who had played upon the ignorance and the passions of the mob; by a handful of conspirators was the 'draught designed to cheat the crowd and fascinate mankind.' And these conspirators were 'an infernal, dark-designing group of men . . . obscure, pettifogging attorneys, bankrupt shopkeepers, outlawed smugglers . . . wretched banditti . . . the refuse and dregs of mankind.'" (Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization*, 1937, p.269.) This is what was said about George Washington and his friends and combatants at the time of the American Revolution. How does this compare with what Messrs. Berle, Schlesinger & Company, and even the President of the United States, have to say about Fidel Castro?

But the main accusation which is made against the Cuban Revolution is that it is an "alien product," that it receives support from abroad. Professor Schlesinger makes a lot of the fact that the Cuban Revolution represents an inroad of forces which are "alien to the inter-American system." Let me submit to you another passage from the standard work of the Beards: "It is difficult to believe that the Congress could have staggered through the Revolution, if it hadn't procured such generous financial assistance from the government at Paris." This statement referring to the American Revolution can be found on p. 242 of *The Rise of American Civilization*.

This, however, does not exhaust Professor Schlesinger's mighty assault on the Cuban Revolution. The Cuban Revolution is something which he is determined to see destroyed because it has not been carried out by a process of free elections. Quite an historian he who believes that revolutions are carried out by elections! For a revolution is precisely an upset in the existing constitutional or governmental process, an upset which

—by definition—cannot be carried out within the framework of the constitutional or governmental process which it sets out to destroy. And with reference to this point I would like to mention a further passage from the Beards' work (p. 257): "It would be conservative to say that, as far as balloting was a measure of popular support, not more than one-third of the adult white males in America ever set the seal of their approval on the Revolution by voting for its committeemen and delegates."

Let us put it bluntly: the White Paper is disingenuous. The White Paper is an absolutely hopeless attempt to disguise a very simple proposition. And this proposition is that what our government is setting out to defend, cost what it may, is not the process of free elections, not democratic freedom, not civil liberties of any kind. What our government is setting out to defend is private property in the means of production. What our government is setting out to defend in this hemisphere, under the name of the inter-American system, is the American empire exploited by American corporations. If we want historical evidence for this proposition, such evidence is amply available. The United States government has never gone out of its way to overthrow any Latin American dictators, nor has it made any efforts to upset Mr. Franco in Spain, Mr. Salazar in Portugal, or any of the tyrannical sheikhs maintaining slavery in the Near East. But remember what happened when a few years ago the Republic of Guatemala put Mr. Arbenz into power—by means of a most democratic, most orderly, parliamentary election. Mr. Arbenz began transcending the limits of a bourgeois regime, he began tampering with bourgeois institutions. Mr. Arbenz proceeded to enact a genuine agrarian reform. And in the process of so doing he interfered with the interests of the United Fruit Corporation. At that point he was declared to be "subversive," at that point the United States government went into action to overthrow Mr. Arbenz's democratically elected administration, at that point the CIA "elected" a new government for Guatemala which promptly cancelled all of Mr. Arbenz's reforms. A similar fate befell Dr. Mossadegh in Iran, about whose massive popular support there has never been any doubt, as soon as he dared to tackle Western oil interests.

Of course none of this has been or is being done in the name

of private property. It would be hard to arouse much enthusiasm that way. All this has been and is being done in the name of democracy and free elections. And to this end an assumption is tacitly smuggled in that the only expression of democracy is a free election, that democracy and free elections are one and the same. In this way, what is actually only one aspect of democracy is turned into a fetish; although in many countries and on many occasions, free election has meant nothing but plain and unadulterated swindle. What does free election mean in the American South, and what is the precise content of a free election when the people—as is more and more the case in this country in general—are given the choice between six and half-a-dozen? What is the significance of a free election in countries where opinion is shaped by a corrupt press and corrupt radio and television, where the freedom of the people is in the hands of a corrupt police force, and where the nation as a whole lives under the weight of omnipotent vested interests? As if the decision of people cannot be expressed by other means than free elections—and in certain historical situations, *only* by other means! The Cuban people have, indeed, exercised their privilege of freely electing—by fighting and dying in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra they have elected a revolutionary, democratic, progressive government and have overthrown the bloody tyranny of Batista.

What is more, it so happens that in the last few days the Cuban people had another occasion for a free election. For the entire invasion enterprise was based on one fundamental assumption, that the Cuban people are seething with unrest under their “oppressor” Fidel Castro, that the Cuban people want nothing more than an opportunity to rise up in arms against their new tyrant. To quote *Business Week* once more, “the main hope of an anti-Castro victory depends upon massive defections from Castro’s armed forces and militia which number about 300,000.” (April 15th, 1961) These 300,000 militia men and women are armed, according to reports published in our press, with the most modern weapons; they control the entire country. Why didn’t they, workers and campesinos of Cuba, supposedly oppressed and miserable under their present regime, turn their weapons against their oppressors and exploiters? The torch of

"freedom" was brought to them, the cry of revolt was sounded by the ex-Batista men who landed on the soil of Cuba, the liberators arrived in the middle of the island. The Cuban people were given the historic opportunity of a truly free election. They were given the possibility of making a choice between Miro Cardona and Fidel Castro. All of us know what the Cuban people decided. All of us know how they voted. Making use of this opportunity for a free election, they rallied as one man behind their democratic, socialist government and threw the invaders where they belong: into the garbage can of history.

The question which arises now is what policy Washington will henceforth adopt with regard to Cuba. To this there is as yet no obvious answer. I heard over the radio President Kennedy's speech today. I haven't been able to read it as yet. The speech seems to be full of ambiguity and vagueness. But one thing is apparently decided on in administration quarters and that is that the fight against the Cuban people should be continued, that everything possible should be done to destroy the Cuban Revolution. The reason which is now given for this decision, a reason which is an addition to those advanced in the White Paper, is that Cuba constitutes a threat to the national security of the United States. The utter ludicrousness of this proposition is so obvious that it hardly calls for comment. The six million people who live in Cuba are supposed to represent a threat to the security of this mightiest nation in the world! On the island of Cuba, in Guantanamo, the United States has a naval base. This naval base undisputedly controls all of Cuba. Where is then the threat to American security? Has it been claimed anywhere that the Soviet Union or any other country within or without the hemisphere has been using Cuba as a military base? No such claims have come to my attention. Was Premier Castro ever asked to commit himself not to allow any power to use Cuba as a military base? No such request was ever made to my knowledge, although I am convinced that such an assurance would be given by Castro for the asking. Is there a threat to United States security in the 300,000 Cuban militiamen armed with rifles and machine guns? Is there a threat to the security of the United States in the 50 or 80 or whatever the number may be of fighter planes which are supposedly reaching



Cuba from Czechoslovakia or some other country in the socialist part of the world? Apart from the fact that fighter planes are weapons of defense and not of offense, is the military potential of the United States such that 80 planes could jeopardize the safety of our shores? I don't think that anyone could honestly maintain any of this. I think that to all the other shams this sham is a fitting addition.

But what is and has been an issue all along is the example of *Fidelismo*. The staggering, magnificent success of the Cuban Revolution is a source of hope and inspiration to the Latin American people everywhere. What is threatened by Cuba is not American security. What is threatened by Cuba is what President Kennedy and Professor Schlesinger refer to as the inter-American system. And the inter-American system is only a thinly veiled euphemism for the control of Latin America by United States corporations. What is threatened by Cuba is a continual exploitation of Latin American peoples. And these peoples, inspired by the shining example of Cuba, may decide to substitute for President Kennedy's inter-American system another system. A system of freedom, of progress, of socialism.

This is why *Fidelismo* has to be crushed. This is the reason why no means are considered to be too dirty to be used in the effort to strangle the Cuban Revolution. In the light of this, what effrontery it is to accuse Fidel Castro and his government of procuring weapons from wherever they may be able to get them in order to defend their people and their Revolution against undisguised aggression! What effrontery it is to cite their attempt to defend themselves as a reason for our seeking to rape Cuba! Over 100 years ago Karl Marx wrote in his little book *The Civil War in France* the following magnificent sentence: "All this only proves that the bourgeois of our day considers himself the legitimate successor of the baron of old who thought every weapon in his own hand fair against the plebeian, while in the hands of the plebeian a weapon of any kind constituted in itself a crime." This is the spirit of our present government. This is the spirit of the New Frontier. And it is to a policy in this spirit that people who consider themselves intellectuals—Messrs. Berle, Schlesinger, Rostow and the like—lend their support and their talents.

## INDEMNITY FOR PRISONERS

BY FIDEL CASTRO

With all respect I want to tell you the following:

This committee has not taken any practical steps to carry the negotiations to a positive and immediate result.

The delay in the negotiations is only useful to those who need this time to carry out against Cuba a campaign as hypocritical and hateful as the rest of the criminal proceedings against our fatherland that have been carried out by forces organized, equipped and managed by the Government of the United States.

The Revolutionary Government (of Cuba) has expressed with complete clarity its points of view about the question, while those who should have been the most interested in repairing their grave violations of international law and morality, and their great political and practical errors that led the United States into one of the most disgraceful episodes of its history, have only been zigzagging, pretending and indulging in ambiguities.

The responsibility of the Government of the United States for the invasion of Cuba and for the deaths and destruction that it caused in our country is thoroughly known by world public opinion and recognized by the authors of the aggression themselves.

The only way to have avoided this embarrassing situation would have been respect for the sovereignty and integrity of our country, in conformity with the law of nations, large or small, and universal morality.

Cuba does not bear the blame, but only and exclusively

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*This is the text of the message sent by Prime Minister Castro on June 7, 1961, to the committee which was raising funds for the payment of the indemnity—in the form of tractors—demanded by Cuba in exchange for the liberation of the invaders. (Text from the New York Times, June 8.)*

the United States, for the maddening situation and the discredit that its policy of aggression against Cuba has created. It is also to blame for the fate of its mercenaries who launched themselves on an illegal and immoral adventure against Cuba.

Cuba has the right to impose exemplary sanctions on those who committed, against their own country, the crime of high treason, from the moment they acted under the orders of a foreign government, as the President of the United States himself has confessed.

It would be a grave error to interpret the gesture of Cuba toward liberating these prisoners except those responsible for previous crimes—with the sole condition that material damages be indemnified—as weakness, inhumanity or negotiations of a material type.

The Government of Cuba has indicated willingness to renounce all material indemnity if the United States Government will free, and ask its allies to free, an equal number of North American, Spanish, Nicaraguan, Guatemalan and Puerto Rican patriots who are jailed for fighting against fascism, racialism, colonialism, tyranny and imperialism. These allies are Francisco Franco of Spain, Luis Somoza of Nicaragua, Miguel Ydigoras of Guatemala and Muñoz-Marin of Puerto Rico, the last three being accomplices in the aggression against Cuba.

Neither the Government of the United States nor this committee has deigned to say a single word about the possibility of this real exchange—liberty for liberty—while, on the other hand, Cuba is willing to renounce all material indemnity if the United States and its partners are willing to renounce the desire to keep in jail Pedro Albizu Campos, Henry Winston and other true patriots. They would be exchanged for an equal number of invaders who, in the inglorious and treasonable role of soldiers of exploiting monopolies, attacked their country with the escort of ships and planes of the powerful United States.

Your committee knows exactly the type and amount of the material indemnity Cuba asks, since this was given to you in detail by the delegation of prisoners. The Government of Cuba will adhere strictly to this without entering into a shop-keeper type of haggling.

It has become known that in the aggression against Cuba

the Central Intelligence Agency invested \$45,000,000, while the United States Treasury did not skimp a cent that would serve to destroy the lives of Cuban men, women and children and cause great material damage to our country—which permits us to call ridiculous and disgraceful the attitude of those who oppose an indemnity for the material damages.

The raising and negotiation of this problem cannot be made only by cablegram, and it is better that a delegation should be sent to Cuba. In this there should be one of the principal members of the committee, preferably Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt or Milton Eisenhower, whose names, because they are better known in political spheres, would contribute to the solution of the matter.

If the committee is in the honorable position of being willing to mediate in this problem, without hesitation or timidity, it should send the delegation, which has been mentioned in previous communications, to deal with the Cuban Government either on the payment of the indemnity or the question of liberating an equal number of North American, Spanish, Nicaraguan, Guatemalan and Puerto Rican prisoners.

Is the committee perhaps afraid to discuss the liberty of other men jailed for political motives in the United States, Spain, Nicaragua, Guatemala or Puerto Rico? Does not this type of case appear doubly humane?

The Cuban Government states with all clarity that in making these suggestions it is not following underhanded political aims and that it will not desist from its generous attitude.

Permit me to express to the members of the committee our thanks for its reiterated affirmations that it is acting on motives of human interest to demonstrate its friendship to the Cuban people.

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(continued from inside front cover)

Che Guevara's article deals with the crucially important theoretical question whether Cuba should be looked upon as an exceptional case or as the vanguard of a movement destined eventually to encompass all of Latin America. Guevara is rightly regarded as the leading theorist of the Cuban Revolution, and the importance of his views on this question needs no emphasis from us.

Marc Schleifer's "Cuban Notebook" is in an entirely different vein. Mr. Schleifer is a sensitive young American poet who went to Cuba last winter with few preconceptions and no political commitments. The powerful impact on him of what he saw and heard forms the central theme of these notes. We believe that many, many other young Americans would be similarly affected if they could visit Cuba as Mr. Schleifer did, though probably few could convey their thoughts and feelings as successfully. As you read "Cuban Notebook," you will come to understand better why Washington is so anxious to keep Americans from going to Cuba to see for themselves what is happening there.

Professor Baran's piece is not an article but the transcript of an informal radio talk given immediately after the failure of the invasion in April. It catches and holds, we think, the intense feelings of anxiety and indignation which so many thoughtful Americans experienced in those days so dark for our country. Let us not forget, and let us redouble our efforts to persuade the American people that only through a fresh start in foreign affairs can the United States hope to wipe out the shame of the Cuban invasion.

Prime Minister Castro's message to the self-styled "Tractors for Freedom Committee" is a document of importance in respect to what he calls the "hypocritical and hateful" campaign launched against Cuba following his proposal to liberate the prisoners in exchange for indemnification, in tractors, for the material damages inflicted by the invaders.

News about MR Press publications:

(1) Publication of Che Guevara's book *Guerrilla Warfare* has been postponed to July 17 because of an unforeseen delay in binding. The postponement gives additional time—to July 17—for the purchase of the book at the prepublication price of \$2. On July 17 the price goes to \$3.50.

(2) We are now reading page proofs of our big book *From Yalta to Disarmament: Cold War Debate* by Prof. J. P. Morray. Finished books will be available, we hope, by the end of July and will be mailed to prepublication buyers at that time. Prepublication price is still \$3.50; on publication date, some time in late August, the price will be \$8.50.

(3) The fastest-selling pamphlet in MR history is Prof. Paul Baran's *Reflections on the Cuban Revolution*. The first edition, originally published at 35¢ per copy, is now exhausted. We are reprinting the pamphlet with the addition of two radio talks (one of them appears in this issue), at the new price of 50¢ per copy.

(4) A beautiful up-to-date catalogue of MR Press books, both cloth and paperback, should be off the press by the time this number of the magazine reaches you. If you want to cooperate in adding to the growing number of MR readers, please send us 50¢ with the name of a potential new subscriber, and a note to go to him or her. We will enclose your note with two sample copies of the magazine.

Goodbye until September.

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